A Child's Religion

Mary Aronetta Wilbur

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A CHILD'S RELIGION

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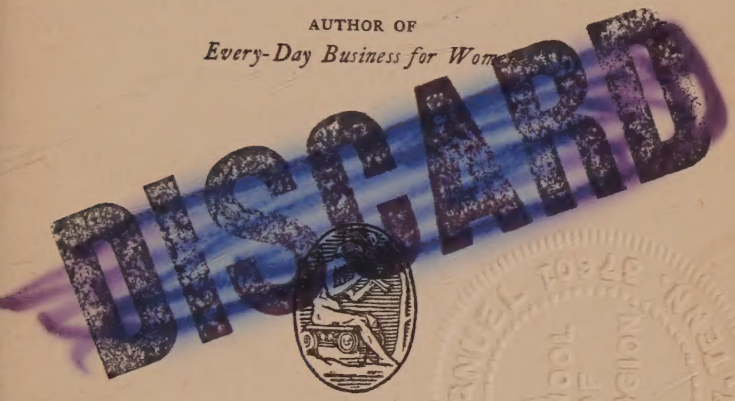
A Child's Religion

By
Mary Aronetta Wilbur
AUTHOR OF
Every-Day Business for Wom...



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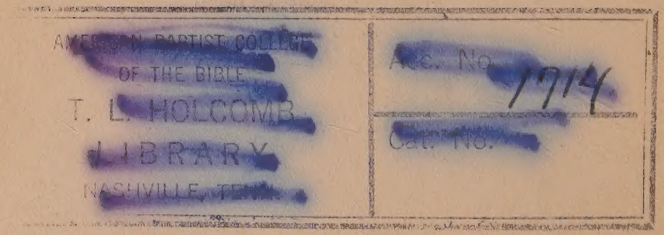

TO
THE BLESSED MEMORY
OF MY DEAR MOTHER

Mary Eunice Copp Wilbur

WHO FROM YOUTH TO OLD AGE
TAUGHT LITTLE CHILDREN
THE LOVE OF
GOD

L'ENVOI

Go, little book; God speed thee on thy way,
And bear thy message straight to loyal hearts,
Who, seeing all to-morrow in to-day,
Are striving in the strength His grace im-
parts
To guide God's little pilgrims, lest they stray.

FOREWORD

THESE brief papers are the outgrowth of many years of observation and experience in the teaching and religious training of children. The conclusions have been drawn from cases of neglect as well as from those of nurture; for we are admonished by the one sort, and advised by the other.

Thomas K. Beecher once declared to a company of Sunday-School teachers: "You cannot give your children religion; that is not your province. Your work is to keep the child in position before God." A vastly important and tender work that is; and these papers have been written from time to time, as occasion demanded, to consider certain aspects of that work. Many of them have appeared in *The Churchman*, and are here reprinted by the courtesy of that paper. In their collected form it is hoped that they may have a wider usefulness than the single articles could have.

May every teacher of children find here some of the blessing that the preparation of these papers has brought to the writer.

WASHINGTON, D.C., 1917

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A Child's Religion

I

A CHILD'S RELIGION

A Study from Life

IT is a vital question with Christian parents at what age a child's religious training should begin. Some take psychological alarm at the idea of expecting a child to appreciate anything as mysterious and difficult as religion: forgetting that childhood loves mystery. Some postpone the teaching, because they are really at a loss how to impart what they themselves earnestly believe, and so let the child's instruction wait until a Sunday-School teacher can give it to him. It is with the desire to throw some light upon both these aspects of the case that I have detailed the experiences following. The child described was not abnormal or precocious in any way, and the results achieved, and the

means by which they were obtained, were not at all unusual. The mother gave no thought to such problems as heredity and environment, but her strong sense told her that if a child is to be religious, it must be taught the faith; and that the religious influence upon character, exerted by the environment during the tender, formative years, should be abundantly supplied by home instruction and formal services.

This is the story of what that child was taught, and the child's impressions and resultant education.

According to my mother's account, it was her custom to tell me Bible stories in those early morning hours when a two-year-old awakes, and the nurse has not yet arrived; and so fond of them did I become that, when sleepiness forced her to stop, I would pull at her eyelids and demand, "More Moses, more Joseph."

Next I seem to have made the acquaintance of Jonah, and when I tumbled from my hobby-horse and my father asked the

reason for the racket, he was promptly informed that "Jonah fell overboard." I do not know when I was first taught, "Now I lay me down to sleep," but so strongly was it impressed upon my consciousness that it was the correct prayer, that I was nearly grown before I dared to omit it, feeling that my prayers would be incomplete without it.

I was taken to church at the tender age of four, and expected to keep quiet during a forty-minute sermon, and a long prayer of fifteen minutes, the old-fashioned Presbyterian sort. It is perhaps needless to say that I did not always succeed, and one day was ignominiously taken out of church during service, for bad behavior, taken home and put to bed by my mother, and later whipped by my father. The only impression that these early experiences made on my mind was, that church was the proper place to go on Sunday morning, and that I must behave myself there.

My notion of heaven became definite in my sixth year, when my father died. I remembered his funeral distinctly and espe-

cially the Masonic rite. Thereafter heaven was where my beloved father had gone; and I awoke to the consciousness that I was the head of the little band of sisters, and must teach them what my father had taught me — to scorn a lie, and to fear nothing.

I think the stories of the Christ Child and the Saviour were taught me before I could remember. I seem to have had a protective and proprietary feeling for the Baby Jesus, which changed with my growth; until it was Christ, the Friend and Elder Brother, the Helper who understood what I needed and wanted, that claimed my love and loyalty.

My next recollection dates from my eighth year. I was with my grandmother at Clifton Springs; one Sunday morning she was unable to attend chapel services, so my younger sister and I went alone. It was a communion service, and I think the first that I had ever seen; and when the invitation was given to "all who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity and truth," I promptly went forward, undeterred by the fact that I

was the only child kneeling at the altar rail. The minister passed me by in the distribution of the Elements; an omission which hurt me, and which I could not comprehend, because I was sure that the invitation had included me—for did not I love the Lord Jesus? My grandmother explained it later, and thereafter I looked forward to the day when I should be a church member.

On my eighth birthday I was given a Bible, and I promised my mother to read ten verses every morning; a promise I scrupulously kept, reading ten verses, and no more, straight through from Genesis to Revelation, not omitting the twelve genealogical chapters of First Chronicles.

Somewhere about this time I remember believing absolutely in the power of prayer, and testing it whenever I lost anything, by asking that I might find the article; and I have a distinct recollection of many answers. When I read of the promise, "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove (Matt. 17:20),

I was much impressed, and after much deliberation determined to try it, but was deterred by the fact that there was n't a mountain within three hundred miles of our house; so I decided to postpone the trial until I could watch the effect of my command.

At night my mother used to read to me the stories of the Exodus and the Wilderness, and the old Bible hero-tales, from a Bible illustrated by Doré and other famous artists; and these heroes were as real to me as the men of the Revolution were afterwards; and I caught their message, that God punished the wicked and rewarded the good, and that those who trusted Him were not left desolate.

Our usual Sunday programme was to go to church in the morning. Then after dinner we were required to study our Sunday-School lesson, and to learn a verse to recite at prayers on Sunday night; sometimes we older ones were assigned a topic for our verses and had to consult the concordance to find them.

Sometimes, if the time was very long, as it was in summer when Sunday-School began at five o'clock, we were asked to learn a hymn; memorizing was easy work, and we soon acquired a large stock of hymns.

I was duly impressed by the fact that my grandfather's favorite psalm had been the ninetieth, and that my father's favorite chapter had been the twenty-second of Revelation I admired both of these ancestors, so, of course, it troubled me that I had no favorite portion of Scripture. After much thought I selected the twenty-fifth of Matthew for my chapter, as the picturesqueness of the sheep and the goats, the ten virgins and the story of the talents appealed to me; that seemed a good chapter because it had so much in it, and I was well satisfied with my selection.

The promises of the Bible, made to the old Hebrews or specific people, I applied to myself, and expected their fulfillment; being just as sure that I was one of the elect as I was that I came from Pilgrim stock. Hell never frightened me; that was

a place where somebody I didn't know was going; I was booked for heaven.

There must have been much direct teaching of holy things by my mother and by the Sunday-School teachers, who were all women of beautiful character, but that I do not remember distinctly. I do remember, however, that from the age of twelve I was trying to "be good" as I understood it, and I took my first communion on my fourteenth birthday. Thereafter I left childhood, with its curious misinterpretations, behind, and the growth in grace was accompanied by a growth in knowledge as well.

It was inevitable that I should pass through a period of doubt when I left college, for most young people do, but through it all I never doubted that *God is and God loves.* That was my creed rock when everything else was storm-driven, and that was so ingrained into my consciousness by my early training that I could no more doubt it than I could doubt my own existence. And when in later life the second storm came, aroused by a study of the extreme higher

criticism, and in that first shock it seemed that everything I had ever known or believed was being swept away from me; this faith stayed, and, helped by the unshaken faith of my mother, I weathered that storm also, and came into the quiet haven of readjusted views and clearer faith.

II

THE CHILD AND THE CHURCH

FOUR times in the New Testament we have a record of Christ dealing with children. First when He took a little child, and setting him in the midst, taught from the living text a lesson in humility to the apostles, who were disputing such a theological abstraction as rank in heaven; declaring that the little child was his personal representative, for "whosoever shall receive one such little child in my name, receiveth me." And again, when He took the children in his arms, and bade them "suffer the little children to come to me," and blocked the way with no theological dogma, as his Church has sometimes mistakenly done. At the triumphal entry into Jerusalem the prelude of the world's greatest week, no blare of trumpets heralded his approach to the royal city, but children's voices acclaimed the children's Friend as King. And after the

Resurrection, when repentant St. Peter was protesting his love, he was charged to show it by obeying the injunction, "Feed my lambs."

Strange is it indeed, in the light of these records, to read the story of the succeeding ages, and see how minor a place this command of Christ's occupied in the Church's history. We have been slow to grasp the full significance of these events, and have spent ages in controversy, while the little children wandered; and have often been far more zealous in driving heretics or unbelievers out of the Church, than in training the future members within the fold. For the child of to-day is the Church of the future.

According to Professor Kidd, the distinctive feature of nineteenth-century civilization is its regard for the future as shown by its interest in the child. But the potentiality of child life is only just being realized; its psychology is studied, and the value of early and correct education emphasized; and the enormous effect that physical environment may have upon the child's

tendencies toward good and evil is profoundly impressed upon many. The import of these facts the Church is slowly perceiving, but she has not yet used all the forces that science has put into her hands. She seems like one awakening from sleep, whose eyes are opened and whose body moves slightly, while the full personality still slumbers. For her leaders see the need and the importunate opportunity; but the whole body of her membership is not yet aroused to its duty and privilege in this matter.

It may be of interest to note some relations in which the Church has stood to the child from an early date. Earliest was youthful, or infant, baptism, whereby the Church claimed the children as her own. In the mediæval Church, the ceremony of baptism for the child strikingly expressed this idea of membership. The child was met outside the church door by the priest, and after some ceremonial, which included a prayer of exorcism, was then led into the church by the priest. After the baptism, which was

usually trine immersion, he was vested in a white robe, and a lighted candle was put into his hand, symbolizing by the pure vesture and burning light the preparation to meet the heavenly bridegroom.

In the lifetime of our blessed Lord the Jewish Church was diligently instructing her youth in regularly established schools, in which the law, the prophets, the Jewish history and poetry were taught; and it is probable that it was in one of these schools that He manifested that growth in wisdom which was recorded of Him. The Christian Church early realized the need of instruction, for her future members, old or young, and the catechumens were fully instructed. In these schools catechisms were used; these were brief statements of great doctrines and truths, given orally, and easily memorized; so that the catechumens might be qualified to "give to every man a reason for the faith that was in him." By this means they learned the chief facts of the Gospel narratives, and were taught faith by the Creed, hope from the Lord's Prayer, and charity from the

Decalogue, with its prescribed duties to God and man.

But in the darker and decadent days of the Church this form of instruction languished. With the stirring of the Reformation catechetical instruction was revived as a valuable aid to knowledge of the truth; and reformers of widely varying views saw its importance. Calvin laid great stress upon the Sunday noon instruction of children, and wrote a catechism intended for them, but his work was hardly adapted to the child mind. Luther vehemently exclaimed, "Let the people be taught; let schools be opened for the poor, let the truth reach them in simple words in their own mother tongue, and they will believe!" To facilitate this teaching, he wrote his own catechism in such simple phrases that it "did much to mould the character of the German people." The Westminster Catechism has been an influence in character building for the older generation of Presbyterians all over the world; and although many of its definitions are difficult for children, yet this document

has been "closely associated with Scottish public elementary education," and a rugged piety built itself upon "the chief end of man is to glorify God." By the fifty-ninth canon of 1603, and the rubric of the Prayer Book, the clergy were enjoined to teach the catechism of the English Church, which was set forth in 1549, on Sundays and on holy days after the second lesson at Evening Prayer; and the heads of families were held accountable for the religious instruction of their families and dependents. The brief and simple statements of this catechism were easy to learn, and "its very simplicity has given it a firm hold on the inner life and consciousness of devout members of the Anglican Communion throughout the world."

But all this provision concerned itself chiefly with those within the fold of the Church, and many good people began, after a while, to realize that the multitude were growing up in ignorance of any religious teaching. John Wesley, as early as 1737, held Sunday classes, while in charge of the

parish of Savannah, Georgia. In 1782, the philanthropist, Robert Raikes, opened a school for poor children; at first combining secular and religious instruction, and holding its sessions on Saturday and Sunday. The use of child labor in the mills soon made it impossible for the children to come except on Sundays. The industrial evolution which characterized the end of the eighteenth century also stirred the Church to follow Raikes's lead, and organize Sunday-Schools on an extensive scale.

So the movement has grown, until now an eminent encyclopædist asserts that "there is no doubt that the great Sunday-School organizations of the various churches still deserve to be reckoned among the educational assets of the nation, and as agencies, both of religious instruction and of general culture, they may tend, under modern educational and religious developments, to play an increasingly important part."

Although the necessity for a Sunday-School is an accepted fact, and these schools are established in every parish, there are

important questions concerning them still unsolved, which relate chiefly to their management and conduct. Some of these we shall now consider.

There are many systems in vogue, all trying to answer the question, What shall the Sunday-School teach? If we remember that it is the Church of Christ dealing with its own present or prospective members, we shall see that above all things it must teach Jesus Christ. It is not sufficient to ground the children in the facts of the Bible, if we do not teach its spirit. A child may be able to tell the story of every miracle, and describe every great event in the life of our Lord, and still fail to grasp the fact that He was an actual personality, and really lived on earth; or that his life had or has any bearing on our daily life. We must make this a part of the child's life by very definite teaching, not contenting ourselves with the inculcation of motives alone. Scientists tell us that, even when a person is hypnotized, he cannot be compelled to do a thing which he has been definitely taught is wrong; so

that carefully trained people cannot be made to steal or to murder, because the definite instruction of early life has created an inhibitive process, which controls the will in those directions. So let us teach, "Thou shalt," and "Thou shalt not," and help the child to bring all the actions of life into one or the other of these categories.

And because it is the Church's school, we teach the child the historic creeds which embody the faith of Christendom; and we should teach him also the history of that Church, that he may know the connection between apostolic days and ours, and reverence the hoary and venerable body which, whatever her mistakes may have been, has still guarded the faith through nearly twenty centuries.

But these things must be vitalized also. A creed is not merely a form of words — a creed means a life; and those old Crusaders, who stood with hand on sword as they recited the creed, had the right idea. "I believe, therefore I serve," is the full extension of a creed, for "faith without works

is dead." Hence it follows that the child should be taught definite forms of service for the Lord Jesus Christ, as well as words of faith. In the work of the Church as well as outside of it he should be made to know where and how a child can help to conquer the world for Christ; for service stirs love and increases loyalty.

It is eminently in the province of the Sunday-School to teach a reverence for holy things, and a reverent demeanor in church. That there is a crying need for such teaching among our American children and adults, any one who travels widely may easily observe. Let us teach it early, for a character without reverence misses much in depth and a proper adjustment to life. And it must be taught by example as well as precept.

Since the object of a Sunday-School is to train the future membership of the Church, confirmation is a distinct point to be attained, and it is toward this that the rector, as pastor, must lead his little lambs. "I will give you pastors according to mine heart, who shall

feed you with knowledge and understanding" (Jeremiah 3 : 15), was one of the promises of the golden future for obedient Israel, and when such feed the lambs they are well fed.

Not always has there been the careful instruction and preparation that now usually precedes that rite; and Bishop Cosins relates that, even after the Reformation, bishops would confirm candidates in the highways and on the streets without any "sacred solemnity." That time has happily gone by, and the parishes are few where conscientious and faithful instruction is not given to the candidates for confirmation. To the properly trained child confirmation will be a longed-for privilege, and the young heart will glow with the desire to induce others to enjoy this privilege.

There is a great waste of spiritual energy just here in many cases; and the faithful pastor should see to it that every confirmed person is set to work at once. Let each be made to feel that the least that one can do, and the first thing to be done, is to find some

one person to whom he can act the part of brother and help him to find the Christ center of life. It is not too much to say that upon the inculcation of this spirit depends the future growth of the Church, "the gift that is in us" by the laying on of hands, needs stirring up if it is to increase.

There still remain two questions concerning the Sunday-School, and upon the answers to these its success must largely depend. Who shall be the scholars and the teachers? and how can we get them?

It is not always an easy matter to get even all the baptized children of the Church to come to Sunday-School. There are cases known — few, I trust — where the little children of the rich will not come to a Sunday-School which contains poor children, for fear of contracting some disease. One parish meets this need by having a Saturday school for the religious instruction of the little children of the rich, while the poor come to the regular Sunday-School. How this plan will meet the situation is yet problematical, for it is still on trial.

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A personal canvass of the households of the parish and the neighborhood seems to be the most effective way of reaching the children. A most influential method also is to encourage the boys and girls already in the Sunday-School to bring recruits, stipulating that they shall not be drawn from other schools. Every member of the parish should be on the alert to get children into the training school of the Church; for unless every member of the Church realizes the importance of training children, and takes some part in furthering that work, by effort and example, it cannot all be done. The work of registering every child born in the parish on the Cradle Roll of the Sunday-School might well be done by those who do not teach in it; the child thus grows up in the Sunday-School.

There is a great call for teachers and a great need for their training, for to the awakened consciousness of to-day it is not enough that a teacher should interest her class, she must really train and teach them. It seems that it would be a wise provision for this need to have a Normal Class con-

nected with every Sunday-School. This class might meet on a week-day, if that proved to be more convenient, although the moral effect would be better if its sessions were held at the regular hour. Here the older pupils, young men and young women, could be taught how to tell a Bible story, how to explain great doctrines simply, and how to keep order and excite interest in the things of the spirit. Fathers and mothers of young children could attend this class for instruction, for many parents need such help, and would welcome it. This need not be a rector's class, for all rectors are not teachers, unfortunately; perhaps in the future a course in pedagogy will be provided and required by our theological seminaries to fit the men for the teaching work that every rector finds opportunity to do. A successful teacher of experience would be the best leader.

But still the question comes, How shall we get men and women to teach in our Sunday-Schools? Train the Sunday-School children for it; let the Normal Class be the goal of their endeavor through the years of their pupilage,

and impress upon them their moral obligation to teach as they have been taught. And further, the spirit of self-sacrifice still lives in the Church, and although it may mean the giving up of a Sunday afternoon of relaxation, I believe that the teachers may be found. Let the Church pray for her teachers, as for her priests, and pray earnestly to find them, that those whom the Lord has called may offer themselves for this work.

For truly in this time of multiplied means to make a Sunday-School interesting and effective, we are in danger of forgetting that the personality of the teachers is the greatest asset. We may have the most approved kindergarten methods for the primary, and may use the most complete and artistic helps in the whole school, and have the best music obtainable; but, unless we have men and women who can teach Jesus Christ and the Christ-life out of the fullness of a firm belief and a precious experience, our teaching will be in vain.

What shall the Church of the future be? Shall it be marked by a deep and thorough

knowledge of the Word of God, by zeal for his Church and his cause, by love for the unregenerate world, and a desire to spread the glad tidings to them? The answer must come from the children of today, in the Sunday-School, or out of it now, the baptized members of our Church. How are we training them for the great work whose continuance and expansion must depend upon them?

A little boy, who was taken to church for the first time, was greatly impressed as the choir came in singing, "Onward, Christian soldiers," his favorite hymn. He turned in great excitement to his grandmother and asked, "Is that the 'cross of Jesus going on before' and are those little boys the really truly Christian soldiers?"

Yea, verily, and before them lies the battle for righteousness.

III

CHILDREN AND MISSIONS

THE most fascinating chapters in the history of the Church are those great ones which tell the story of her missionary triumphs. They mark the stages of her growth far more clearly than any chronological record of dogma does. For missions are faith in action, theology vitalized, the continuing witness to the Church Militant.

The history of the primitive Church is written in the lives and labors of St. Paul, St. Barnabas, and those other sons of the faith, who jostled the world out of its bloody grooves, and taught the gospel of the kingdom of peace.

The conquest of Christendom was not the work of a year, nor even of a century; but in those early days, every convert seemed to feel the obligation to missionary effort; and some of them did notable work. In the fourth century we find that the con-

version of the whole kingdom of Iberia (now Asian Georgia) was ascribed to Nino, an Armenian girl.

The history of the early British Church is a noble chronicle of missionary efforts. From the secluded churches of Scotland and Ireland, the fruit of the labors of St. Patrick and St. Columba, went out companies of missionaries whose "zeal seemed to take the world by storm." And in the next century we find companies of noble men and women, from the newly evangelized English churches, going over to those German wilds where Winifred or St. Boniface won his martyr's crown. It has been said of these English companies that "the energy of warriors was exhibited in the enterprise of conversion and teaching."

Coming down to a later day, we find that missions have played a large part in our own national history; for French Roman Catholic missionaries were among those early explorers, who found their journeys "as difficult as the way to heaven." Englishmen also realized that a new country meant a new

opportunity for preaching the Gospel; and Sir Walter Raleigh gave one hundred pounds "for the propagation of the Christian religion in Virginia." The "Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in New England and the parts adjacent" was formed in England, and among its missionaries was John Eliot, "the apostle to the Indians"; practical John Eliot, the precursor of the modern missionary, who translated not only the Bible into the Indian tongue, but also a book on logic, that by learning the law of reason the Indians might be better fitted to understand the Scriptures.

We cannot follow here the thrilling story of the Moravian missions, nor yet of the great awakening of the Church by William Carey, in 1792. Nor need we dwell upon our own time, which has seen the Sandwich Islands Christianized and the Prayer Book translated by their king; has seen Japan take rank as a great power, and witnessed the birth of a Chinese republic, tolerant of Christianity and indebted to it.

The new life which is stirring the hearts

of Christians to-day is manifested on the mission fields. Schools, hospitals, printing-presses stand side by side with churches. To save men's souls is only part of the work; to save their bodies, which may be "the temple of the Holy Ghost" is seen to be divine service also. We heal and teach these people that when they have been thus assured of our sympathetic humanity, they may receive the preaching of our Christianity.

If now some one asks, "Why do we have missionaries?" we may point to the record of the past; for the Church has grown in power and spirituality as she has awakened to the need about her, and taught the truth to others. It is as true of the body spiritual as of the body physical, that it must be exercised if it is to grow.

As a part of Church history, therefore, needs must that we teach missions to children; nor should we forget, in presenting the subject, that when Jesus Christ came as a missionary, He came as a little child; and the further fact, that a very large part of our

work concerns itself with children. These facts help children to relate missions to themselves.

But the obligation to teach missions is higher than Church history. It follows naturally our teaching of the creed as service, of the necessity of patterning our lives after the self-sacrificing life of our Master. Then, when our children have learned to love the Saviour for themselves, it is easy to arouse their interest in people who do not know Him, and to stir their zeal to serve. For in such teaching the child must learn that religion is not a thing for himself alone, but that he is the trustee of a precious treasure to be shared with others. There is a *noblesse oblige* about missions, and the child who knows the story of the introduction of Christianity to his ancestors, will feel the force of that obligation. He learns vividly from missions, what applied Christianity is, and a new appreciation is awakened in him of that dynamic power of the love of Christ which sends men and women out, at the hazard of their lives, to spread the knowledge of the

love of God. These are the considerations which answer the question, "Why teach missions to children?" For if the Church of the future is to have the missionary spirit, it must be aroused in the children of to-day.

In presenting the subject of missions to children, manifestly our first duty is to give them a clear and intelligent idea of the connotation of the terms "missions" and "missionaries"; and to satisfy their inquiries as to the reason why people go on missions, and how we can be said to send them.

Concrete illustration is the keynote for the teaching of children; and to teach missions it is well to have "a real live missionary" talk to the children, whenever this is possible. For they — and their elders as well — are apt to put all missionaries into the category of strange people, like the people in a book; and it is a necessary shock for them, to see that these are only every-day men and women, whose great love for Christ is the only extraordinary thing about them. It opens a child's eyes to the possi-

bilities of service by himself in this direction.

The stories of what missions have done for peoples in other lands, of the social transformations which they have effected, and their tales of heroism, are fit subjects for children. The annals of any mission station could furnish stirring stories of danger and heroism to-day. Tales of Mackay of the Uganda, or Paton among the cannibals of the New Hebrides, could be told as thrillingly as any dime novel of adventure. Stories of Martyn and Carey, of Judson, Zinzendorff and Taylor; of the devotion and heroism in persecution of Chinese converts, of the wonderful record of sacrifice and success of Pastor Hsi of the China Inland Mission; of Bishop Hare among his Indians, and Bishop Rowe's journeys in Arctic snows; these would interest and inspire boys and girls, young men and maidens. These stories are but an extension of that record of missionary heroism and martyrdom given in the acts of the apostles, and the annals of the succeeding centuries; they show a true apos-

tolic succession of zeal and love and devotion.

The great cause of Christian unity is bound up with missions; and since the day when John Eliot, at peril of his life under Puritan laws, entertained over night a Jesuit priest from Canada, that he might take counsel with him about the best way of reaching the Indians with the message of the cross, the mission field has been the leader in the breaking down of barriers between Christians. Therefore it is well not to restrict our study to our own Church's missions. Are not all these others also soldiers of the cross, fighting the good fight, although in a different army corps? And it may follow as a result of such broad teaching that a godly emulation may stir our children to have their own Church undertake a larger work and plant her banners on a wider field.

When this state is reached, that the children desire to extend the work, then we must teach organization, and acquaint them with the machinery by which the work is

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carried on. Explain the boards of the Church, and the tributary societies, and trace the journey that their dimes and nickels make to the treasury. If possible the teacher should visit the Missions House, and learn how missionaries are chosen and commissioned and equipped; and how supplies are sent out. All this detail is interesting to children, and will make them understand what "contingent expenses" mean, and how real a part of mission work they are.

There is a story told of a small boy who made his missionary offering somewhat reluctantly, because he feared that it would all go for "paper and string." We must make it clear to the child, how small a proportion of the money goes in that way; and as paper and string are necessary for the safe carriage of the bundle, so are offices and clerks a necessary part of the machinery which carries on our mission work.

The privilege, as well as the duty, of giving should be emphasized. On one occasion a certain colored preacher addressed his congregation on this subject after this

fashion: "The Lord don't need you, my brethren, to preach the Gospel. He could make the clouds his messengers, and let the winds of heaven carry his message. But He lets you do it; He gives you the privilege; and how are you doing it? Just look at your gifts!" Let us stress our Lord's last command, "Go ye, and preach and baptize," as one of the strong, positive, directions for Christian living.

Now the question arises, can any of this teaching be done in the Sunday-School? At least once a month a short talk of fifteen or twenty minutes might be arranged for, to be given by the rector, superintendent, some teacher or a visitor. Take a different country or theme each month, and tell the children something of the Church's work there, illustrating it by pictures or curios; and on other Sundays a certain portion of time should be allotted the teachers for class instruction.

It will help to impress the smallness of our endeavor for "the people that sit in darkness," if large flags bearing a cross are

placed on a map of the world, in the Christian countries, and similar tiny ones, at all mission stations in the world. Statistics help also; so few missionaries to so many millions of people. We must take care to follow the suggestion of the Edinburgh conference, and always allude to these others as non-Christian nations, admitting their good points, yet showing how much they need Jesus Christ.

In the library should be some missionary books; and the children might be sent to the public library to read up topics for class work. This makes missions seem a part of their necessary knowledge. It is an eye-opener for a child to find an item about missions in the newspaper; it takes missions out of the field of the visionary into the realm of every day.

Many things may and must happen as a result of interesting children in missions. We shall set before them ideals of life and character, the Christ-life embodied in noble men and women, which may affect their own development. We shall lift them out of the

slough of a materialistic aspect of life, by laying stress on the victories of the spirit; and their faith will be strengthened as they see what that faith has done for others. And not only the foreign world, but our own cities will feel the regenerative effects of this faith, and zeal, and hope, of the children. For we shall emphasize the patriotic aspect of home missions; and since the continuity of good government in a republic depends upon the integrity of its citizens, so the education and religious training of those citizens, in our cities or in remote districts, is a matter of vital interest to all citizens everywhere.

It was to the children that despairing Christendom looked, in the thirteenth century, to win back the holy sepulcher, hoping that their purity, and zeal, and love, would prove an irresistible force. So they were sent out on the fatal Children's Crusade, inspired, but unprepared. The lesson for us is plain. We must so train and prepare our children, that this awakened army may lead our Church into a realization of her duty, and help her to perform it; and may make unity

a fact, by the simplicity of their faith, and the singleness of their aim.

As we look out upon the world of souls, held in the bondage of ignorance of that love divine, let us lay aside all minor differences, that we may rally all our forces for the attack. Let us gather them from home-taught, and Sunday-School-trained, and Church-inspired men and women and children, as Godfrey de Bouillon gathered his forces from all Christendom; and then, with a faith and a courage like that of the Crusaders, let us go forward to the attack, with their battle-cry upon our lips, "God wills it!"

IV

THE SONG AND THE CHILD

HAPPY is the child whose life begins with song, for whom the first conscious sound is his mother's lullaby. For so there is born in his soul the sense of melody and of rhythm, the sense of something beyond the commonplace, and the world becomes to him a world of love; for his mother's song has mysteriously conveyed his mother's love, and her arms encircle his world.

For the effect of song is not produced alone by a mere series of nervous responses to stimuli, nor yet by an intellectual appreciation of the words, but is also due to the fact, that song is one of the truest ways of expressing that inner self which would otherwise be inarticulate. For into our singing we put our naked souls, rejoicing in the opportunity thus afforded for a self-expression which is to us, and to those who hear us, a self-revelation as well. If a word, as Arch-

bishop Trench declares, is only "man's thought coming out that it may behold itself," song is his deepest emotion daring to express itself, and we know the singer as we could not without his song.

"Four parts of the speech," wrote a colored man in a civil service examination, "are laughing, crying, talking, and singing"; and his fundamental philosophy was not far wrong, although he strayed far from the paths of grammar. The happy little child as he skips along puts into song — which is the rhythmic motion of words — his feelings, his experiences, and even the news of the day. The boy of later age may sing sentimental college songs; but, for fear least they betray his real self, he adds a rollicking and inappropriate chorus.

The patriotism of nations finds expression in their songs; the French Revolution centered around the "Marseillaise" and it will yet stir patriotism to fever pitch. The German Revolution of 1848 became cohesive and effective because the patriotic songs of the group of poets, of whom Körner was a

leader, had prepared the hearts of the people; and "Die Wacht am Rhein" has united the German Empire.

There is an inarticulate devotion which finds expression in song, in hymns, which St. Augustine defined as "praise to God with song." It has been noted by historical students that religion flourished best when men sang most; and this is so, because the religious feelings of the race, which are its profoundest emotions, have from the earliest times expressed themselves most easily in song. This was true in ancient Egypt; in the ancient Chaldean worship of Abraham's time, when song formed an important part of the temple ritual. Tertullian relates that, at the love feasts of the early Church, each man was invited to come forward and sing to God's praise something either taken from Scripture or of his own composition. "One might hear," writes St. Jerome about A.D. 420, "the ploughman at his hallelujahs, the mower at his hymns, and the vine-dresser singing David's psalms."

It was the songs of the Reformation that

popularized it, and Heine called Luther's great hymn, "A mighty fortress is our God," the "Marseillaise of the Reformation." In restoring congregational singing, "for the comfort of such as delight in music," Queen Elizabeth stipulated that the hymns should be "in the best sort of music that may be conveniently devised, having respect that the sentence [i.e., sense] of hymns be understanded and perceived."

The beautiful hymns of Charles Wesley sang the Gospel into many hearts, and did much for the success of the great Wesleyan movement. In all ages religious music has seemed the spontaneous outburst of praise; its ordered movement meant uniformity of worship, instead of individual cries and appeals; the musical tones expressed a deeper fervor than the words alone could convey; and something of that "divine afflatus" which possessed the composer of the hymn stirred the hearts of those who joined in the singing. For whether it be by means of solemn "De Profundis" or triumphant "Te Deum," our stoniest griefs dissolve in music,

and our thoughts rise to rapture on the wings of song.

Song has served many uses; it has uttered the miseries of captives in Babylon, and its epithalamions have greeted happy brides. It has nerved men for battle and crowned their victories. The stern soldiers of Cromwell's armies went into battle singing psalms; and after the victory of Agincourt the English army voiced its thanksgiving by singing Psalms 114 and 115. Song has even been used controversially, and in the time of St. John Chrysostom the streets of Constantinople were enlivened by bands of the adherents of Arius singing the light hymns by which he was popularizing his doctrine, and then by great ceremonial processions of choirs singing the stately hymns of the Church. The riots which ensued put an end to this musical propaganda.

Song has a distinct pedagogic value, for words set to music are riveted in the memory by the double hold of sense and rhythm.

It is because of its tremendous potential

effect that a ribald song seems worse than wicked words, for its influence will last longer. "Let me make the songs of a nation, and I care not who makes its laws," said the great De Medici; and the first indication of a reformation, either national or individual, is a change of song. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he," says the proverb; it is equally true that as a man sings, so is he really, for the songs that he sings are his true moral index.

These are the considerations that give song such an important place in the education of the child. The truth may be so ineffaceably impressed upon his mind and heart by the songs that he sings in childhood, that later doubts can never shake his faith in the divinity and presence of Christ; and although he may seem to scoff, in his memory there must linger the feelings of the child as he sang, —

> "I think when I read that sweet story of old,
> When Jesus was here among men."

And the last day alone will reveal how many

souls have been sung into the kingdom of heaven.

These facts impose a grave responsibility upon all who are concerned in the education of the child. For the expanding heart of the child will find expression in song, and it is our privilege to choose the vehicle for that expression, to determine the character of his songs.

It is a mistake to think that a child must be taught only light airs and words; children are often extremely fond of minor keys, as though pleased by the contrast with their own moods, and all children are naturally religious. They are in such a mysterious world; they are so used to the fact that they cannot understand everything; they feel so keenly their littleness and need of protection, — that it is easy for them to accept and rejoice in the possession of a heavenly Father and an invisible but personal Saviour. Here, then, is our problem, no less than our opportunity. All around him the child hears the lively airs, and lighter words, of the popular music of the

day; and it is sad, indeed, to hear the trifling and cheap music of the street on the lips of little ones whose sweet child souls still bear the heavenly impress. How can we give them something that shall displace light airs by good music, and light words, by those of beauty and simple devotion?

In the earlier days of the Sunday-Schools, there were no hymns for children, and they sang the same hymns that their elders did. Then a few attempts were made to write hymns for children. Some of these older attempts would be amusing, if one did not reflect upon the evidence they afford of a wasted opportunity. From an old song-book of sixty years ago comes this hymn: —

> "As Robert Raikes walked out one day,
> He saw some little boys at play,
> Upon the holy Sabbath Day,
> Aplaying, playing, away.
> Then away, away, we can't wait any longer,
> Away to the Sunday-School."

This may be an historical statement, but can hardly be classed as a devotional hymn.

From a Sunday-School hymn book pub-

lished thirty-five years ago, we get the following specimens: —

> "Rosy cheeks will pass away,
> Pearly teeth will soon decay."

Would not every child who sang that couplet instinctively think of the dentist, and forget the moral lesson with which the hymn ended?

The second selection is even worse: —

> "Ring the bell softly,
> There 's crape on the door."

Imagine a crowd of happy children singing that song as an act of worship!

There is now an abundance of good hymns for children; but in addition to them we may well teach the great hymns of the Church, and their history. Would it not awaken in the child a sense of the continuity of devotion to know that our "Gloria in Excelsis" was the early Greek "morning hymn," and has been used in Rome since the time of the Emperor Hadrian? He would sing the "Te Deum" with awe, if he knew that it had expressed the praise

of Christian congregations since the fifth century, and that it was associated with the conversion of St. Augustine. "The voices flowed into my ears; the truth distilled into my heart: I overflowed with devout affections, and was happy." So wrote the great doctor of the Church.

The Crusaders would step down from their historic niches, and become real to him, as he imagined the Red Cross knights singing, on a spring morning, in Palestine, the beautiful "Crusaders' Hymn":—

> "Fair are the meadows,
> Fairer still the woodlands,
> Robed in the blooming garb of Spring:
> Jesus is fairer,
> Jesus is purer,
> Who makes the woeful heart to sing."

Tell the child the story of Martin Luther in the Castle of the Wartburg, wrestling with temptation in such real fashion that he threw his inkstand at the wall, to crush the devil who seemed so real and so near. As the child remembered the ink-spot on the wall, he would appreciate the lines of the great battle hymn of that strenuous soul:—

"And though this world with devils filled
Should threaten to undo us;
We will not fear, for God has willed
His truth to triumph through us."

Such stories would make history and religion vital and human to the child; and enable him to fuse present need and aspirations with the longings and struggles of the past.

In order that hymns may reach their highest usefulness with the child, they should be clearly explained to him. A New England grandmother once told me that as a little child at church, she was much puzzled to hear the congregation sing, — as she thought, —

"Lord, how delightful 't is to see
A whole assembly *wash up* Thee."

The idea shocked her sense of reverence, but, child-like, she did not mention her perplexity to her elders; and it was only when she could read that she was relieved to find that the hymn really said: —

"Lord, how delightful 't is to see
A whole assembly *worship* Thee."

Another child thought for many years

that "haven guide" was a place, since the line seemed to be sung, —

"Safe into the Havenguide."

At another time this same child, unaware that many kinds of words may be set to hymn music, became much excited at hearing the congregation singing the familiar tune of "Greenville," and turning to her mother exclaimed in a tragic whisper, "Oh, mother, they 're singing

"'Go tell Aunt Sally
The old gray goose is dead,'

and it 's in church!"

The appropriateness of the sentiment to the child's mind and feelings, should also be considered, if song is to be more than a musical exercise for the child. Not only must he understand what he sings, but he must feel the truth of it; his devotion will never become articulate by singing songs whose sentiments he does not share. In the full flush of youth and its enjoyments, he does not find "earth a desert drear"; nor does he feel heaven to be his only home, when

experiencing the loving care of father and mother: nor is he apt to sigh, "O Paradise, O Paradise, who doth not crave for rest," while every nerve tingles with the fun of a ball game. "Fight the good fight," he can easily understand, for he is playing games to win; and "Onward, Christian soldiers," stirs every child's imagination with its call to activity. Most children love the intimate picturesqueness of "O little town of Bethlehem," and "Joy to the world" and "Hark, the herald angels sing," give him that joy of real self-expression which all song should afford.

It would mean much to our children if they always understood what they sang so well that it really voiced their own emotions; for song would then do a double work upon them. Their souls and minds would be left in a state receptive to devout influences; they would be so attuned to the rest of the service that inattention would be minimized, and reverence increased; and the seed sown in such good ground would bear fruit an hundredfold.

There is yet another consideration: song is one of the hinges on which memory turns her records; so let the child have the example of the elders in singing, that in later years he may remember, "This was my father's favorite hymn"; "My mother loved that hymn." Let him carry in his memory the full-hearted way in which the congregation joined the choir in singing the "Magnificat" or the great "Te Deum," the "Benedictus," the "Venite" and "Nunc Dimittis." Give him these splendid examples, and he will feel that "the praise of God in song" is the most natural thing in the world.

There is, moreover, a beautiful comradeship in song; it is one of the blessed ties "that bind our hearts in Christian love." I can still remember the curious feeling that possessed me, when, as a child, I discovered that many well-known hymns did not belong to any one group of worshipers; but that Episcopalians, Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Baptists, and Methodists all sang them. And great was my astonishment to learn that Roman Catholics also sang the

"Venite Adoremus." And then, although I was too young to know Church history, my eyes were opened to a great truth, and there came to me a glimpse of what the real unity of Christendom was; and there arose a great longing that the time might come when in the great essentials we should all be one.

"Hymnody," says the Right Honorable. the Earl of Selborne, "has embodied the faith, trust, and hope, and no small part of the inward experience of generation after generation of men, in many different countries and climates, of many different nations, and in many varieties of circumstances and conditions. . . . It bears witness to the force of a central attraction more powerful than all causes of difference, which binds together times ancient and modern, nations of various races and languages, Churchman and nonconformist, churches reformed and unreformed: to a true fundamental unity among good Christians; and to a substantial identity in their moral and spiritual experiences."

This is the heritage which we open for the child by the judicious selection, and

intelligent teaching, of the hymns of the Church; this is the great company of the faithful into which he enters by the gate of song; and he feels the sense of comradeship with the strong and earnest souls of all ages.

"Earth with her thousand voices praises God," sang the poet. The older ecclesiastical artists put into the hands of the angels and cherubim, in their pictures, musical instruments of wood and silver and other materials; because, as they quaintly thought, the dumb trees and rocks wanted to praise God, and could only do so by being made into instruments of music. The soul of the child is likewise struggling to express itself; let us put into his heart the songs that shall liberate that expression.

V

THE CHILD AND HIS BOOK

IN the Congressional Library there is a beautiful series of lunettes by Alexander, representing the history of the book. The series begins with a picture of men piling up stones to form a memorial cairn, like that at Gilgal which marked the Jordan crossing, and was intended to start inquiry among children's children, and to furnish notes in stone for the future story-tellers. And in the next picture one sees an Arab wise man, surrounded by a group of desert listeners, to whom he is recounting the stories of the tribe. Then follows the Indian painting his pictographs on a skin; and then the monumental hieroglyphs of Egypt. The series draws to a close with the patient monk, toiling with brush and pen over his illuminated manuscript; and reaches its splendid culmination in that press of Gutenberg which gave wings to thought.

And as one remembers also that savage who was wont to scratch his thoughts on a beech leaf, and meditates on this strange story of a book, the question arises, What impulse has stirred men, what desire for remembrance has prompted them, savage and civilized alike, to strive in these various ways to perpetuate the deeds and thoughts of their time? It seems as if it expressed a striving of the soul that felt itself immortal, and struggled to express its immortality.

This is, however, mere speculation; yet by all these evolutions in the art of preserving thought, the growing self-consciousness of the race has developed. Men wrote, at first, of battles and dynasties; then hymns of worship; and then of the thoughts, experiences, and emotions which are common to all men. And the only books which were great enough to come down to us are those which interpreted most truly the universal life of men.

In our own age the advanced self-consciousness of the race expresses itself in books which describe with minuteness every

phase of life, and analyze with scalpel-like keenness "the thoughts and intents of the heart." The last discovery in science furnishes materials for our novels, and the most awful disaster is speedily expanded into many volumes. The four quarters of the globe are investigated and described for our delectation, and no effort is spared to inform and amuse mankind.

Among its many other names, this age has been called the "Era of the Printed Page"; and it is preëminently so, since we even write in type. In old China men used to go around the streets to gather waste papers, with the cry, "Revere and spare the printed paper." Back of the cry there lies a hint of the mystery of printing, that strange magic which enables arbitrary symbols to convey and preserve for us those psychic processes of other minds which we call thoughts. But the multiplicity of printing-presses has destroyed the reverence for the printed paper; except, perhaps, among children. For them something of the mystery still lingers.

Some years ago it was the fashion to give lists of the hundred best books, according to popular vote or to the dictum of distinguished men. Then we have lists of the books that have helped. Rarely did a list of the hundred worst books appear, nor did any distinguished or undistinguished person confess which were the books that had hurt him. For most people know that books are fruitful sources of those "evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul." Books are incarnated thought, and one may be helped or hurt by contact with a book as with a person.

This is preëminently true of children. "Where did you hear of such a thing?" you ask a child, and he solemnly replies, "I read it in a book"; and that fact settles its truthfulness for him. "Why did you do so and so?" and he answers, "The boy did so in the book I just read," and that seems to him a sufficient explanation. It was an objection often urged against a certain class of books, common a generation ago, that all the good children died; and there were

doubtless many boys and girls in whom the love of life was so strong that they resolved not to be too good in order that they might remain alive.

It is evident, then, that especially to children books are very important things; for the child sees life through the books that he reads, and his ideas are formed, his desires stimulated, and his standards of morality influenced and partly formed by books. The recognition of this fact has led to the publication of books for children on a wide range of topics. All the tablets of knowledge are sugar-coated for them, and they travel toward learning over a macadamized road, in a rubber-tired touring car, without much effort on their own part. Many of these books are admirable in tone and teaching, while some lay so much stress on cleverness that they seem to regard it as permissible for the hero to lie and steal in order to gain his end; and such books must be classed as unmoral, if not immoral.

Since books so greatly influence the child mind, there is surely a need that the Church,

which is trying to train him for God, should see to it that the right sort of mental food is supplied to him.

In judging a child's book there are two things that must be considered: Is it such a book as a child ought to read; that is, will its influence be helpful in the nurture of the young personality? And is it so written that a child will want to read it, or have it read to him? The answer to the first question establishes a standard below which it must not fall; the second fixes the standard which it must reach in order to be successful: the adult makes the first; the child, the second.

The adult insists that the child's book shall be distinctly moral in tone, that it shall emphasize the good in life, and shall furnish the child with suitable models for his own behavior. For children, even to-day, are mentally like the peasant folk of the Middle Ages, for whom mystery and miracle plays were acted, that they might have concrete illustrations of the virtues and see the punishment meted out to wickedness.

It is also required that the illustrations shall help the child to understand the story; and that, artistically, they too shall be moral, and teach truth in form and beauty in expression and idea; that so they may furnish suitable mental pictures for the child.

Any one who knows children is aware of the keenness of their critical powers, and the sureness of their likes and dislikes; and their decisions are as prompt and irrevocable about books as about people. No amount of argument can persuade a child to like a book if he has once decided that it does not reach his unformulated, and, perhaps, unconscious standard.

And what does a child demand in a book?

Curled up in an easy-chair with his book upon his lap, one sees the child so absorbed in his story that he is oblivious to everything else; the sun shines over him, the birds are calling outside, but he heeds not. What can hold a child so closely? He has found a book that stirs his imagination by its vivid picturing of historic deeds, or its beguiling recital of strange adventures in unknown lands, or its

fantastic conceits of things and life in the unknown and unseen regions of fancy, or its realistic stories of the doings of boys and girls situated like himself.

Sometimes the author of the book has "made things lively by making them local," to quote Chesterton's phrase, and all youngsters delight in such localization. He is fond of fairy stories pure and simple; for to him dwarfs and gnomes, brownies, pixies, elves, and nymphs are just as credible personages as Abyssinians or Thibetans, Maoris, Zulus, or any other people beyond his acquaintance. It is all one to the child; world-consciousness is dawning or nascent, not yet developed, and to him all stories belong in the same category.

He is keen to detect any discrepancies between the descriptions and the illustrations of a book; for in his book he demands truth, as well as an appeal to the imagination and a story told in a human way. He wants his story with clear-cut outlines, in distinct blacks and whites, without any shadowy dimness of characters, or gray shadings of moral actions.

The child is critical of style, and a story told in language that is "simple to the verge of baldness" is not acceptable to him. He likes a few words that he cannot understand, but must reach after — for do not the grown-ups consult the dictionary? — and he feels the thrill of a conscious acquisition of knowledge when he must inquire about a word. Absolute novelty of subject is not necessary; for, if given a dress in the language of to-day, the age-old stories will charm children now as they have through all the centuries.

Fundamentally there is but one demand; the story must be so furnished with familiar detail that the child can relate it to his own life, and so make it seem real. This furnishes the justification for good historical fiction; it teaches the child in a most impressive way the events and characters of history, so that he can feel the time and appreciate the situations. In a Sunday-School library such works would be especially helpful in vitalizing the characters of early Church history, and would make saints and martyrs and fathers companionable to the youth of to-day.

To sum up the matter briefly, then, the books in a Sunday-School library must be such as a child will read. To have a boy condemn a book as "stuffy," or "pious," is enough to kill his interest for many years in the subject of which it treats. So our books on missions, on Church history, on general morals, on everyday Christian living, must conform to the standard established by childhood, if they are to serve any useful moral purpose.

The question is often asked, Is it necessary to have a Sunday-School library if there is a good town library? In schools composed of prosperous families the need may not be so great; but among the poorer classes it is imperative. For these lack the initiative to procure library cards, and often the carfare to and from the library is an important item in the family expenditures. But even under the most favorable circumstances the need exists. A library supplies a part of the education which the Church is providing for the child; by means of its well-chosen books she strives to impress upon the child the

lessons taught in class; and she seeks to provide for that soul-culture, which is our chief concern, by furnishing books that shall help, not hurt, the tender and impressionable mind. Associational values are large in children, and to a child who loves his Sunday-School, the books from its library bring a special message.

There is, moreover, the further fact to be considered, that in many of the poorer families the Sunday-School book furnishes reading for the whole family.

This brings us to another phase of the question, namely, the coöperation of the home; the child is imitative, and is apt to affect the reading of his elders. And thus it happens that "What do the grown-ups read?" becomes a vital question. For reading affects the soul-culture of the adult almost as much as it does that of the child. We are discriminating about the lectures we hear, and the plays that we attend, and exceedingly critical about the sermons to which we listen. Are we careful enough about what we read, and its effect upon us?

It seems a simple rule that we should ask ourselves what we expect to gain from our reading. If one would grow wise, he reads wise books; if he wishes to become expert in any branch of knowledge, he confines his reading to technical books. If we take our Christian life seriously, should we not give attention to such reading as shall make us and our children grow "in wisdom and in favor with God and man"? For from books we absorb into our thinking the thoughts of others, and "as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he."

VI

ON TELLING BIBLE STORIES

THE persistent survival of certain traits of human nature, through all the changing and advancing centuries, is a continual source of amazement. Grown men gather now at club or banquet, in smoking-car or country store, around a good story-teller, just as eagerly as they did when all knowledge came to them orally. The child of to-day, overwhelmed as he is by children's books, is as insistent in his demands for a story as any little half-naked-savage was in times gone by. Every person, be he parent, teacher, friend, or relation, who comes into close personal contact with a little child, must expect to hear the request, "Please tell me a story"; and unless he can gratify the wish, he may expect to fall in the scale of the child's appreciation.

The story is such a universally desired thing that teachers of all ages and races

have used it as a means for conveying truth in palatable form. It can teach history in unforgettable pictures; and righteousness may be exalted, and virtue become triumphant, and the homely abstract virtues be emphasized by concrete personification, in the tale that the wise story-teller unfolds to gratify this desire of his hearers.

To meet a demand so full of opportunity and so certain to be made upon each of us, requires some preparation on our part; for it is not easy for every one to tell stories, since the inventive faculty, the fluent tongue, and the ability to catch the child's point of view are not equally bestowed upon us.

Many books have been written to help people who desire to study the subject, suggesting themes and methods. It should be noted that, while the child likes any story, one that is a "true story" is his especial favorite. This requirement is easily met by the stories of the Bible; and they have an additional claim upon our notice, because, as examples of the short story, there is nothing in any literature to compare with the short

stories of the Bible. The characters are so human, the recital is so brief and dramatic, the lesson is so truly pointed that they serve their high moral purpose now, as well as they did when they were first told to eager listeners or read by studious youth. Let us attempt to analyze the art of these old story-tellers, and try to catch the secret of their charm.

These stories show an intimate acquaintance with human nature, and this gives them their perennial freshness; for human nature has not changed much in the long years that stretch between Abraham's time and ours: its great moving passions and joys and sorrows have known no change, even as they know no nationality. And so to tell these stories well, we must put into them all that comprehension of human nature which experience has taught us. We must analyze the motives for the actions described, and point out their inevitable moral effect. The characters must be real to us, or they can never walk out of the imprisonment of archaic text and become "real

live heroes" for the children. In every possible way we must vitalize our story by the use of imagination based upon information.

For these old writers knew their "local coloring," and we must reproduce it by study. Any one who wishes her telling of Bible stories to reach the point of extreme usefulness should cultivate a thorough acquaintance with facts about the history of the times, the geography of the places, and the customs of the countries where the story is laid. This knowledge will furnish the proper food for the imagination.

These old writers used an abundance of detail, introduced in brief sentences of much discernment. They indulged in a reiteration which children love, as it gives a sort of pendulum effect and heightens the interest for the climax.

One is impressed by the fact that these writers believed their stories to be true, and knew that they had a distinct value historically as well as morally; they were not told merely to amuse. They had a purpose in

telling their stories; for they aimed to show "the third and fourth generation" how God had punished and rewarded, and to read into every event of history the moving hand of Jehovah.

To tell Bible stories well, we need such a thorough acquaintance with the text that we can put the story into our own language; although it is possible to interest quite young children in the stories as they are read from the Bible, with only a running word of explanation here and there. This, however, depends very largely upon the reader. Some people, in reading the Bible aloud, read only the words; others read the ideas as well, and then the story makes its own appeal; for the comprehension of the reader has been imparted to the hearer.

"Study your Bible on your knees," advised Mr. Moody; and then, we would add, go to the libraries and study about it. Learn what the spade of the archæologist has found, and what the skill of the patient linguistic scholar has deciphered and deduced for our benefit. For we need to know the back-

grounds of our story, and these are extremely interesting as they have been disclosed by recent discoveries and studies. We cannot tell effectively these tales of a great people unless their history is real to us. For a people in whose life there was a forty years' desert wandering, and into whose soul the iron of a seventy years' Babylonian Captivity had entered, was indeed "peculiar." A knowledge of Great Babylon, its manners, customs, and religion, and the kings who ruled it and captive Israel, is necessary if we would understand the Books of Esther and Daniel, and much of the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah. And the Egypt of Moses, Joseph, and Jeremiah is surely an interesting theme.

This knowledge will not always find definite place in our stories, but it will color them, and so will help to give the child the correct impression; and also, by putting the stories in their proper historical relation, will emphasize their moral lesson.

For it is our privilege to show the children that these stories belong to the present and

set standards for their own conduct. We must definitely relate the truths that they teach to the vexations, the difficulties, the temptations, the open or covert infidelity, which the children will surely meet in life. For these boys and girls are not going to live in secluded Christian communities like cloistered brotherhoods and sisterhoods, but out in the thick of affairs, in a world bent on other things; in the midst of a hurrying life seeking its own ends; amid comrades scoffing or lightly contemptuous of anything serious — the world where they must struggle to follow after good.

Unless we can so vitalize the stories that they shall be connected with the child's own life, they fail in our hands. A little fellow who had been taught Bible stories was playfully chasing his aunt, and gleefully called out, "Look out, if I catch you I 'll swallow you like the whale did Jonah!" He was too young to get much moral value from the story of Jonah, but he had grasped one fact; Jonah was a real man, and things could happen to Jonah just as they did to him.

Jonah had been taken from the pedestal of observation and history, and made a part of his daily life.

Often the children themselves will be our best teachers in the story-telling art. The story of Moses in the bulrushes had been told to a little four-year-old girl by her aunt; and afterwards, to see how much the child had understood, the aunt invited the little one to tell her the story back again. The recital went quite smoothly until it reached the place where Miriam offers to get a nurse for the baby, when Four-years-old enlarged on the incident in this fashion: "Oh! I 'll get you a nurse for the baby; she 'll be a nice, pretty nurse; and she 'll be so good to the baby." Her acquaintance with the nursery had given her a standard for the qualifications of a nurse that had escaped her aunt.

As an illustration of the child's love of detail, we may mention the small girl, who, upon reading that Job's wealth was doubled after his trial, took great pleasure in comparing the exact number of sheep and camels and asses and oxen which belonged to Job

before and after that event. Properly told, the story of the Tabernacle and of the building of Solomon's Temple will fascinate children; while the story of Esther, with its wealth of suggested detail, is a treasure mine.

It is a matter of importance that we, like the Bible writers, believe the stories which we tell to the children; for these keen young people will know, from our tones and unconscious attitude toward the story, whether we believe it or not.

The fact of miracles troubles some people in accepting the stories of the Bible, and consequently in relating them. In the light of the scientific attitude of to-day, that should no longer trouble any one. There is not a miracle recorded in the Bible that is more incredible to us than some of the achievements of to-day would have seemed to people a hundred years ago. Could the men of Marlborough's time have been told of battles in the air fought with machine guns, of submarine warfare, of smokeless powder, and of the deadly achievements of liquid fire and

poisonous gas on battle-fields and in trenches, it would have staggered their credulity. Or had they been told of sending the human voice over forty-six hundred miles from New York to Hawaii; or of sending pictures by electricity, they would have been skeptically amazed. Science now concedes that miracles are possible, and that we may not yet have discovered the laws which underlie them. We no longer think that we have penetrated all the secrets of the universe, or that all the laws of creation are scheduled in our text-books. Such being the case, it seems reasonable to accept the statements of the old writers, and wait for fuller knowledge for the explanation. The age of science is ushering in the age of faith; and the conquest or utilization of the invisible universe makes easy the belief in the unseen God.

Here the little child may well lead us, for to him miracle is always possible, since all life is for him the progressive unfolding of mysteries.

The telling of Bible stories is therefore an unique art. It is not the mere art of amusing

the child, nor the mere quieting of his demands; it is not confined even to the stimulating of his imagination, nor the setting before him of inspiring models of the virtues, and warning personifications of the vices. But with all these there goes a deeper result. Only these stories link him with the other world, with the great supreme powers, and put his growing soul into its correct relation with its Creator. Hence these stories teach religion, for that, in its simplest form, is the binding of the soul to God.

All knowledge must be preceded by interest, say the psychologists; and so these wonderful stories furnish us with the correct and incomparable means for imparting truth.

To the conscientious teller of Bible stories there comes a great reward. For the preparation of mind and spirit, by study and prayer, brings an increased sense of the wholeness of that brief chronicle of man's long search after God and of the fullness of the revelation made to him. Equipped with this knowledge, the story-teller will be enabled to explain great doctrines naturally

and simply. Full of information, not only about each story, but of the great subject in all its bearings, the teaching will hold the attention, and the dealings of the Spirit will become understood in their relations to prosaic everyday conditions and individual needs.

Our own faith will revive and grow, and our own souls will be fed at the same sources from which we draw for the child.

"He taught the people by parables." Is it not good to follow in his steps?

VII

A SUNDAY-SCHOOL TEACHER'S BIOGRAPHY

WE learn but slowly from the abstract statement in any science, we need the laboratory of experimentation. The "thou shalts" and the "thou shalt nots" of teaching make but small impression upon our work, unless they are reinforced and illustrated by examples of their practical application. It is this fact which gives value to biography; and it seems fitting in these brief papers on the religious education of the child to sketch here the biography of a successful teacher of the last generation. For the fundamental qualifications of a teacher, and of the pupil, have not changed much with the passing years; and the story of one teacher's preparation, personality, and methods may tend to stimulate those of the present time.

There are lives which are long, but whose biographies are expressed in the one word

— Service. Such was the record of the life of the subject of this sketch. Born in the South, of New England parents, she inherited the deeply religious instincts of her Pilgrim forefathers. To this was added the moral training of the strictest Puritan type, with its fixed notions of the absolute right and wrong in human conduct. The rigidness of this training was modified by the genial, social influences of a semi-tropical city of the Far South. The result of these combined influences was a woman gracious and tactful in her intercourse with others; possessed of an earnest sense of duty toward society, and a deep interest in humanity; keenly intellectual, and enthusiastically devoted to the cause of helping her fellow-men to better and more righteous living.

She used to recall the fact that she attended missionary meetings with her mother when she was only six years old; and she remembered quite well how interested she became in China, the mission for which the good ladies were working.

She was taken to Sunday-School at the

earliest age allowable in a time which knew nothing of kindergarten methods in Sunday-Schools. In the middle decades of the last century no lesson papers were set forth for "Sabbath-Schools," with brief portions of Scripture as a lesson, amply provided with notes and illustrations, and with an unrelated Golden Text to be memorized. Nor did the children make picture-books for the lesson, or use any of the delightful aids that now make the teacher's work easy. Then the children were expected to memorize whole chapters of the Bible, and catechism was a very important part of every Sabbath's lesson.

The influence of the New England Primer was still potent, and the earliest catechism taught was one which inquired, "Who was the most patient man? Job." "Who was the meekest man? Moses." "Who was the man after God's own heart? David." In this way the salient facts about the chief characters of Bible history were taught.

At the age of sixteen she began teaching in the Sunday-School; and her active work

as a teacher lasted until her seventieth year. She saw children's children among her pupils. Very early in her teaching she specialized as a teacher of little children, and assumed charge of the Primary Department, the Infant School as it was then called. But her scholars carried the memory of her teaching and influence through life, and sent their children to be under her care, that their lives too might have the goodly moulding influence of the same great and well-loved teacher.

For she was one of the "born teachers"; possessed of an eager desire to know, that was second only to her yearning to impart, she seemed to have an instinctive comprehension of the needs of the children and their ability to understand; and she knew how to touch the springs of their affections and to arouse their interest. Her normal-school training had been her own full nursery; but long before her own nestlings came, her usefulness was great.

She was a skilled musician, and played the organ as well as taught the children.

And she taught them so to appreciate the words and follow the tune that they were happy to be consciously among those who were "singing and making melody with [their] heart to the Lord." They loved the hymns of the Sunday-School, and well they might; for the entire output of Sunday-School music was examined that she might cull the choicest hymns for the use of her class. These hymns were stenciled on large sheets, so that no one book furnished all the music, and every one could sing.

Her great natural ability as a teller of stories she consecrated to her work; and long before there were any illustrations available for Sunday-Schools, her scholars knew and loved the Good Shepherd. So vividly was the story told that every child who heard it pictured to himself how tenderly the Good Shepherd looked upon his flock; and as he called himself "Jesus' little lamb" felt drawn into a sweet personal relation with the friend who was God.

The governing principle of her life was love; and in her teaching she stressed the

obligations of love rather than the fiat of authority; and she taught her scholars to love God, and to obey Him because they loved Him. Such love of God can only be taught by one ardent soul to another, for faith is transmitted by contagion.

She led her scholars where she would, so great was their attachment to her. They were interested in missions because she was; and made their offerings cheerfully, because they knew and appreciated that so they were helping other children to learn about the Blessed Jesus who loved all little children.

She taught them also the comfort and beauty of prayer; it was just talking with God, the dear Saviour who loved them, who was everywhere, and who could help them. And nothing was too small for them to talk to Him about; no trouble so great but that He could help.

One summer she met in the country a little four-year-old boy who had never been taught to pray. As they were walking together one evening, he confided to her his

fear of being alone in the attic, where he went to bed before his mother came up for the night. She told him about God's care of him, and that he need only say at night, "God, please take care of me." He stopped short in the fields where they were walking, and in the twilight lifted his little face to the sky and said trustfully, "O God, please take care of me to-night, and don't let anything hurt me when I 'm alone in the attic": and then, quite care-free and happy, went home to bed. Was it any wonder that in later years, three Sunday-School superintendents testified that they owed their religious inclination and training to the years in the Infant Room?

Her teaching was based upon the Bible, and a rule of life or a principle of action must be derived from that source to give it authority in her eyes. Her broadly intelligent and reverent mind took in the newer explanations of scholarly criticism and used them constructively; it was still God who made the world, whether He took six days or six epochs for creation.

The close of the Civil War found many churches as well as homes impoverished and crippled. To her husband, a prominent business man having extensive connections throughout the State of Georgia, came many appeals for aid. One church had lost its communion service, another needed hymn books; — and so the stories ran. As soon as she heard these tales, she sent letters of inquiry concerning the Sunday-Schools. Here was another tale of an agency for good so demoralized that it was almost out of existence. But still the children were there; women, if not men, could be found for teachers; and something must be done. The South was ruined financially; her social organization was in chaos; her political fortunes in the hands of rascally "carpet-baggers," or ignorant experimenters. If she lost her grasp on religion, or failed to train the rising generation aright, what was her future to be? These country schools had no money to pay for Bibles or hymn books or papers or catechisms: how could they be taught? These were the insistent questions which

came before her clear, practical, and consecrated brain for answer.

And the answer to the questions came. She devised a card about four and a half by six inches in size, on one side of which the words and music of a hymn were printed; on the obverse there was printed a portion of Scripture, with questions about it; and then a few questions from the catechism.

It was not a simple matter to publish these cards, for the permission of publishers to reprint hymns had to be obtained; and printing music was more troublesome and expensive then than it is now. But no difficulty was too great for her earnest zeal and practical management. The cost of printing and distribution was generously assumed by her husband, and so for three years, at a cost of five hundred dollars a year, eight hundred of these cards were sent out, each month, to the Sunday-Schools in the destitute country districts of North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, and Alabama. The number sent varied from ten to twenty, according to the size of the school. This service

of help was deeply appreciated by the faithful workers in the schools; and her family treasure many grateful letters from ministers and teachers. At the end of three years conditions had become normal, and the Sunday-Schools were able to provide for themselves.

All this time she was not only conducting the Infant Class of her own Sunday-School, but was efficiently coöperating with the work of the whole school. On her trips to the North, every summer, she visited Sunday-Schools to gather new ideas as to teaching and equipment. These she carried back to the work at home; and so much was her judgment trusted that they were at once introduced.

Life brought many changes after the death of her husband, and sorrow followed sorrow; but her strong faith and courageous heart withstood the shocks and she found a solace for grief in wider plans for usefulness. To her it seemed that at least once a year a great central Bible truth should be emphasized in the Sunday-School. And so

she proposed that the anniversary of the founding of the Sunday-School should be especially observed in this way.

For these occasions she arranged an exercise in which the words of the great central truth were formed by floral letters brought by the several classes, and placed on a framework of gray moss, bordered lavishly with flowers. As each class brought its letter, it recited a Bible verse which bore on the main theme. The lesson was emphasized by appropriate hymns and an address which summed up the whole exercise. These occasions drew immense audiences, so that the lesson was widely taught. Later the custom was adopted by many of the schools of the city.

Wherever this teacher lived, she taught the children. As soon as her residence was fixed in a place, if only for the winter, she offered her services in the Sunday-School. She spent one year in a German city, but even here her activities were continued. For her heart was concerned for the spiritual welfare of the little English and American chil-

dren, expatriated by their parents' love of art, travel, or business, who were without any Sunday-School privileges or instruction.

So she opened her own apartment every Sunday afternoon, and taught all the children whose parents would bring or send them to her. It never occurred to her, as it seems to do to some people, that a residence abroad absolved her from the obligations of Christian duty. Here were little children for whom nothing was being done; that constituted both her call and her opportunity: and the answered call brought its own rich reward.

So the years passed; busy years, useful in many lines of activities, but always her Sunday-School was her largest interest.

At seventy, the circumstances of life took her away from her home city, and she was then physically unequal to undertaking work in a new place. Henceforth her teaching was confined to the children whom she met or gathered around her, the friends of her grandchildren. And children were always drawn to her; for they felt the deep

love that was flowing out to them, and their reciprocal affection was her great comfort.

As years and infirmities increased, this became more and more precious; and even at the last, when she was crippled in speech and motion by paralysis, little children would run to help her tottering steps, and sit and talk to her, and pay her those loving little attentions which children know how to pay.

"Her brave and faithful love for God and her fellowmen," as one has described hers, had borne fruit in many directions. Benevolent aid societies, industrial homes, orphan asylums, homes for newsboys and working girls, Indian associations and missionary societies as well as Sunday-Schools, had all felt the efficiency of her connection with them. Yet at the very last, when the shadows of approaching change were gathering close and speech was difficult, she turned to her daughter and said, "The longer I live, the more it seems to me that the only thing worth while is to work for souls; and if God spares my life, I shall try to do more of it."

The call to the larger life came soon after; and with a murmured, "Come, Lord," the teacher of little children went into the presence of the Great Teacher who had declared that "of such is the kingdom of heaven."

VIII

THE CHILDLIKE TEACHER

IT is as the Great Teacher that we who are teaching like to think of our Blessed Lord; for it implies not only that he is our model, but it gives us a sense of helpful sympathy with our work. "He taught the people"; and surely he knew the weariness of unresponsiveness to his message, the disheartening that came from finding that his pupils followed Him "for loaves and fishes" and miracles, even as ours may sometimes come for material benefits. He knew, too, the sadness of having his pupils turn out badly; was not Judas a traitor? And his was also that more joyful experience, the true compensation of the teacher, of knowing that the whole current of a man's life had been changed by his teaching, and that his pupils were teachers in their turn.

And yet He who said, "Go ye, and teach all nations," said also, "Except ye become

as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven." This must surely have implied that even in our teaching we could learn from the child, and that the ideal teacher was the childlike teacher. Can this be so — that we grown men and women must approach our task of high privilege as a child would? We are accustomed to think of the child as a pet, or perhaps a splendid possibility entrusted to our care; but to see the child as a model for teachers is to approach him from a new viewpoint.

What, then, is the child that we may learn from him?

The most prominent characteristic of a child is that he is ever learning, ever increasing his knowledge of himself, of life, of facts of all sorts. The baby grasping at the sunbeam becomes the man who grasps at the difficult and unachieved in the material universe. The child playing with his own fingers and toes to establish his identity becomes later the keen psychologist or the skillful biologist who can trace the microscopic germ through a dozen transformations. The re-

former of to-day was the infant destroyer of the established in the nursery of yesterday; and the curious and sometimes troublesome prying of the child develops into the patient investigation of the scientist, who is trying to read the thoughts of God after Him as they are written in the book of nature. For the child earnestly desires to know; and his mental attitude, often his spoken one, is that of interrogating the universe.

Another marked trait of the child is his desire to impart knowledge. As fast as he learns anything, he wants to teach it to some one else; if there are younger children in his home, they are his pupils; if not, he must tell his elders; for knowledge is not fully his until he has shared its joy with others. This joy of conscious gain in knowledge which the child has is an enviable possession, and one that only constant advance in knowledge can give us.

It is interesting to note also that when a child is telling what he has learned, he uses his own words; for he assimilates his knowledge, it becomes a part of his mind, and

then he is ready to give it to others. And because of this perfect assimilation he can tell his story vividly, enthusiastically, and in such fashion that his little mates will understand it. For this reason a child learns easily from another child; for he receives only the knowledge that the other child has perfectly comprehended.

If our words are to make an impression, therefore, we must not only know the processes of the child mind, and approach our subject sympathetically from the child's point of view, but must teach from the fullness of perfectly assimilated knowledge. No mere repetition of phrases, however beautiful, will give us this power: when the truths that we would teach have become a part of our own thinking, we shall teach them simply, faithfully, and thus convincingly. When the great doctrines have been realized in our living, they will not be difficult to explain to the child; for instead of theological statements we shall give him living truth.

Even from a child's conversation we may philosophically draw helpful suggestions as

to the topics which we may use in our teaching. His conversation is made up of his knowledge and observations of the world; and all knowledge and all facts he relates to himself. If he is telling of historical exploits he begins, "Once there was a man"; and because the hero was a man, he can become, and has become, a part of the child's life and world, although many centuries may have elapsed since the exploit.

The great object of our teaching should be to take the common events of everyday life, as the child does, and transfuse them with divinity. This is the method of all the great teachers of the Bible itself.

Look through the writings of the prophets, and observe the commonplaceness of many of their suggestions and similes. The washerwoman at her tub, the ox and his master, the ass and his crib, the potter at his wheel; the builder, the carver, the refiner at his furnace, the woodcutter, the ploughman at his toil, the sheep-shearer as well as the shepherd; the lonely watcher in the garden of cucumbers, the weaver at his loom, the mes-

senger, — each in his accustomed task furnished a reference or a suggestion for the preacher: and the poet 'Isaiah does not despise even the homely illustration of the bed that was too short, and the covering that was too narrow, for comfort. (Isaiah 28:20.)

From Olympic races and gladiatorial combats St. Paul drew vivid comparisons of the race that is "set before us" and of the good fight that we must fight; and from the Roman soldier who guarded him, he drew the picture of the armor of the Christian in his warfare against the powers of evil. To-day, gladiatorial combats have given way to baseball and football games; and lessons of self-control, of calmness, can be more effectively presented, if illustrations taken from these contests are used, than if we try to impress alone the lesson, "he that ruleth his spirit [is better] than he that taketh a city." (Proverbs 19:15.)

Our Lord continued the same sort of teaching, and drew his parables from the woman with a broom distractedly seeking a

lost coin, and the thrifty placing of the one candle that it might give the utmost light; the pearl merchant and the fisherman, each at his task. He took note of the difference in the foundations of houses, of successful and unsuccessful business ventures, of real estate transactions; of faithful servants and wasteful retainers. We find Him discussing in his talks such secular subjects as taxation, hospitality, and all sorts of social questions. He discussed the current opinions of the day, and proved their incorrectness. He took the common sayings of the people, "Ye say the sky is red . . . ye can discern the face of the sky," using their vernacular, and pointed his lessons with them.

From the daily life of the people He drew illustrations; He took into his teaching the common life of man, with its phases of birth, marriage, illness, and death; shadowed as it is by prodigal sons and erring daughters; took it with its ordinary occupations and experiences, and lifted it into divine significance.

The life of to-day offers to us a wealth

of illustrative material unknown to earlier times; the air-ship, the talking motion pictures, the gyroscope, all the mechanical marvels that mark our time, together with all the wizardry of chemistry and the newly discovered wonders of the processes of life, are ours to use.

Some years ago, Henry Drummond's great book, "Natural Law in the Spiritual World," stirred thinking souls profoundly; to-day, our task is to show the child the spiritual values of his everyday life, the spiritual law in the natural world. Let us not fear to use these things in our teaching; let us not put the world into two sections, labeled respectively "sacred" and "secular," which must be always separated. There is but one universe of men, one Creator; it is all his world. Too long have we kept our sacred things apart, kept religion and our occupations on a separate plane. The salvation of the future, the hope of society, lies in uniting the sacred and secular, in acknowledging the universal sovereignty of God, not his kingship over merely a small province

in the lives of men. The Jewish nation of old even went to war feeling that Jehovah was with them. To be able to find God in human affairs, in the games and lives and interests of children, — even as in nations, — is to make the Incarnation a living reality for the child, a doctrine of inspiration. No life that feels God in it so intimately can ever become sordid.

There is another lesson that we may learn from the child, and that is how to pray; for the child has surely mastered the art of asking. For he asks definitely for what he wants; there is no vagueness in the expression of his desires, no lack of fullness in his petitions. He asks earnestly for the things that he desires from his parents, confident of their ability to supply his wants, believing that it needs only his request to make these things his; for he is assured that the power which he petitions is a loving one, who will withhold no good thing from him who asks trustingly. This is the "assurance of faith" which the saints possess; and it is this calm trust that *He can, He will, because He loves,*

that must underlie all our prayers, if we hope to "grasp with firmer hand [the] eternal grace" which shall fit us to teach the child that he may pray to his heavenly Father in such fashion as he petitions his earthly parents.

From yet another point of view we find the child suggestive; for the law, the most prominent characteristic of the child is growth. The watchwords of his education are, "I must be, I must do, I must become"; and his growth must evince itself along these three lines of character, action, and aspiration. As teachers we must grow, and our growth also must show in increased achievement, more developed character, and larger aspiration. Let us examine ourselves along these three lines; for in order to measure growth, we must have a definite starting-point of comparison.

Why should we know ourselves? The message may be true and be adapted to the child, but does the personality of the teacher count for naught? Were this true the instruction might be given by a graphophone

to hundreds at once, and in many places at the same time. St. Paul tells the Thessalonians that "we were well pleased to impart unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls" (1 Thess. 2 : 9); and a distinguished educator (Dr. Flavel L. Luther, of Trinity College) sums up the situation thus: "There must be put into these young souls from the lips and examples of those who teach them a great yearning for righteousness, a complete consecration to the service of God, a full curriculum of instruction unto the kingdom of heaven."

"On the East Side of New York," says Mary Antin, "teacher is a being adored. Said a bedraggled Jewish mother to her little boy who had affronted his teacher, 'Don't you know that teachers is holy?'"

A skilled workman knows his tools; and since the personality of the teacher is part of his equipment, evidently our first duty is to know ourselves.

Introspection is not much the fashion nowadays; most of us think of it as belonging to the discipline of convents and early

pietists. But we surely need it. Carried along as we are by the rush of events, caught under the Wheel of Things, our real selves impinged on all sides by the juxtaposition of other personalities, do we not need to extricate ourselves by deliberate intention, and in our own closets to examine ourselves?

What coloring shall the Great Message take as it passes through our lips and lives to our classes? Do we know our own faults, our own propensities, our own abilities? Are we conscious of our own prejudices, the likes and dislikes which may affect our teaching? Then there are our relations to the body social to be considered. The time is full of organizations aimed to reform the state of society; what is our attitude toward them? — indifference, ignorance, or sympathy? Is the brotherhood of man a phrase to which we give an intellectual assent merely, or are we really interested in solving the problems of congested cities, and underpaid and overworked fellowmen? All of these things make that subtle and intan-

gible thing known as character, which we so unconsciously transmit to our pupils and associates.

We need also to take note of our intellectual equipment. "I 'm in the fifth grade now, I was in the fourth grade last year," the child will tell you with pride, for he keeps a record of his growth in knowledge. In every well-organized business there is maintained a reserve fund, which is added to every year, to provide for the "obsolescence and inadequacy of equipment." It would seem that all of us have need of such a reserve fund in our intellectual capital if we are to continue to teach effectively. Our ideas may grow old, and our way of presenting truth be inadequate to the needs and opportunities of the present day; for even the very phraseology of religion has changed. There should be an accumulation of new capital added to our mental assets every year; new ideas should come in to displace the old ones, we should adopt new methods suited to new needs. Machinery is discarded in factories to-day, not because

it has broken down or does not do the work it once did, but because a new improvement in machinery will produce greater efficiency and increase the output. Shall we be content with less than our highest efficiency in this task?

The child knows the world around him; what do we know of our world? Let us open our eyes and see; for "He hath made everything beautiful in its time: also he hath set the world in their heart." (Eccl. 3:11.) Can we teach the child convincingly that the presence of God fills all nature, if chemistry, biology, botany, geology, and astronomy are merely names to us? Why teach him the miracles of centuries ago, and not also open his eyes to the daily miracles around him? Is the growth of a giant pine from a tiny seed any the less a marvel because the process is familiar? Should we not wonder at the intelligence of the ant, who knows the process of germination so well that she bites off the sprouting point before storing the grains in her granaries under ground?

Open the child's eyes to the vastness of the universe; show him those points of starry light which form "the ordered system of the marching orbs [which] he makes in viewless majesty of sky"; those gigantic worlds, suspended in unthinkable space, obedient to an unwritten law laid upon them from the beginning.

The Bible is the greatest nature book in the world. Summer's quartette of birds, bees, butterflies, and blossoms flit through its pages; the peace of the great mountains is there, and "the deep that coucheth beneath"; the starry heavens bend over it, and there are "the precious things of the everlasting hills." (Deut. 33:13.) And he who would make this a living book to the child must know the world and bring it to him.

"Isn't this a beautiful morning?" remarked a lady to a laboring-man walking along a country road. He answered, "I haven't time to look at the sky." Can we have our children grow up with such calloused souls? But we cannot interpret

this great nature book of God's revelation, unless we are of those whose spirits are so sensitive that they can

"Feel the warm Orient in the noontide air,
And from cloud-minarets hear the sunset call to prayer."

To Archdeacon Stuck, toiling among the icy wastes of Mount Denahli, the remarkable deep blue of the Arctic sky seemed "like special news of God."

Sidney Lanier, looking out over the marshes of Glynn, watched a marsh hen, and another aspect of God in nature broke upon his inward vision:—

"As the marsh hen secretly builds on the watery sod,
Behold I will build me a nest on the greatness of God:
I will fly in the greatness of God as the marsh hen flies
In the freedom that fills all the space 'twixt the marsh and the skies:
By so many roots as the marsh grass sends in the sod,
I will heartily lay me a-hold on the greatness of God."

We are not all poets, not all alike sensitive; nor are the children whom we teach

alike in this respect; but we must cultivate this spirit in ourselves, and educate it in them, if the "immanence of God" is to be a comforting fact in their lives, and not merely a barren statement. Nature speaks to those who will listen to her. In the quiet of the woods and fields the air may palpitate with the felt presence of God, as really as at the most solemn moment of service in the cathedral.

So into the fields, O Lord, we come,
The fields of the flower and tree;
And our souls draw life from the breath of the flowers,
And our hearts are cleansed by the dewy showers;
For by flower, and leaf and the insect's hum,
We have spoken, O Lord, with thee!

There is a third and most important field of knowledge in which we must know our own place. We should seriously ask ourselves, "What do I know of God?" Sometimes from very reverence we fear to interrogate ourselves on this subject, hindered also by a vague sense of the impossibility of knowing the unknowable, of trying to comprehend the Infinite God.

Perhaps we content ourselves with phrases which have become so traditional that they have lost the sharp vitality which would make them an incisive force in our lives. Do we believe in a phrase? Or is our creed the dynamic of our living? It is not the lips that teach, but the life; it is not our creed that will influence the child, but our character which interprets it for him. And so it is of the utmost importance that we ask ourselves some pointed questions, and insist upon answers.

Do I know God as the All-Wise, the All-Powerful, the All-Loving?—know Him not only as the just and awful judge, but as the loving Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and of us?—know Him not only as the King of Kings and of the universe, but as the Divine Disposer of the events of my own life? Do I know these things with that "audacious certitude of faith" which characterized Habakkuk, so that I am willing to posit life upon it, and live in the glorious and comforting certainty that the great God who "hath made the earth by his power"

(Jer. 51:15), is my shepherd and so I shall not want? This is the faith which will carry the child over life's hard places; is it ours to impart?

And after we have thus found ourselves, have measured our own stature in this way, we must follow the law of growth and increase. This will require deliberate effort on our part as well as earnest desire. For growth in our capacity as teachers follows the law of life, and depends upon food, exercise, and environment. These things are not left to chance with the child that is well nurtured. We are our own guardians in this matter; and it behooves us to place ourselves in such an environment, to find for our souls such nourishment, and to develop our soul qualities by such exercise, that we may continually increase in knowledge of ourselves, in comprehension of our world, and in sensitiveness to the presence of God.

There is still a question which we must ask, and by the answer to this we can determine whether we belong to those teachers who desire to grow, and so turn to the child

for helpful suggestions. "Why must I go to Sunday-School?" says the rare child who is unwilling to go. Why do we go to Sunday-School to teach? is a question which we may well ask ourselves.

Perhaps the motive that brought us was merely a feeling that we wanted to do some form of church work, and this was the usual one to undertake; and so we came to it without feeling that urgent and special call which is as essential to successful work in teaching as in preaching. If this is so, we need to pray with double earnestness,—

> "Lord, speak to me, that I may speak
> In living echoes of Thy tone."

But if we really have been called to this divine work, we come because we have realized so much what the knowledge of God means that we want to help the children to attain the same. We come because we have learned something so precious that we must impart it to others. For we have learned that to have Jesus Christ at the center of our lives is a well-spring of joy; that to follow

his example is the sure road to happiness; and that a vital apprehension of the love of the Father, manifested in the Son, makes life one continuous feast of thanksgiving, a living doxology.

This, then, is the great task for which we would prepare ourselves. And to that end we must so live that we may teach the child that all life belongs to God; that the one form of growth that never reaches completion is to grow "in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3: 18); that all the activities of life may find their inspiration in Him; and that in his teachings are to be found the solutions for all social problems.

We must show the child also that since "in Him all fullness dwelleth," so all art and history and nature may meet in Him. We must, in short, so teach the child that he shall "sum up all things in Christ" (Eph. 3: 10), for this it is to be a Christian.

IX

THE OLD BIBLE AND THE NEW CHILD

OF all the books that have come down to us from antiquity the most remarkable is that Book of books, commonly known as the Bible. Composite in its character, the work of many men, part of its manuscripts are among the earliest extent, while others date only from the first century of our era.

But whether selected by Jewish elders or Christian Councils, the included books were placed there because they contained unmistakably the teaching of the Holy Spirit. And because men believed it to contain the messages of God to men, they have guarded its text with zealous care.

It is a book red with the blood of those who have witnessed to its truth with their lives. The roll of the saints is long, from those faithful Jews who loved the Law and died for it, to persecuted Wycliffe, and to Tyndale burning at the stake, because he dared to put its teachings within the reach

of every Englishman. Even in our own day the missionary colporteurs have braved death to circulate the Bible. Through all these ages men have loved the book because they were convinced that only in its pages was to be found a satisfaction for the soul-hunger of the world.

The historian Green has eloquently told the relation of the English Bible to English civilization, and how it has come to pass that English literature bears such unmistakable traits of Jewish ancestry. For these great messages came to us embodied in splendid examples of the story-teller's art, and are sung in some of the sublimest poetry ever written; and here, and here only, has been answered the age-recurring question, "Whence came I, whither am I going?"

But we Americans may add another chapter even to Green's eloquence. Amid the desolation of the pioneer winters, especially in bleak New England, no library opened then its hospitable doors; no morning paper appeared as if by magic on their doorsteps, to bring them the news of the world for break-

fast-table discussion; and so men were thrown back upon the Bible for literature as for religion.

It was indeed to them a Book of books; for here they found, to quote Green, "Legend and annal, war song and psalm, state-roll and biography, the mighty voices of prophets, the parables of evangelists, stories of mission journeys, of perils by the sea and among the heathen, philosophic arguments, apocalyptic visions." Its characters peopled the wilderness for them, and robbed it of its awful lonesomeness; for the God of the desert was there. And the tempest was shorn of its terrors by the majestic recital of the power of the great Jehovah, who rode upon the wings of the storm, and stilled the raging of the sea; for was not "stormy wind fulfilling his word"?

As they read the great stories of old, of the help given the Chosen People in their times of need, they drew deep draughts of courage from the recital, and took to themselves those promises of help. They modeled their government upon that early theocracy;

they took the stern and serious prophets for their exemplars; and named their children after the old worthies and the Christian graces; so that Prudence and Bethuel, Ezra and Eunice, Grace and Temperance, might be found in the same family. The people of the Bible were so real to them that they were their companions. It was said of one lady that as she grew older "she spent less time with Elijah under the juniper tree, and with Jeremiah in the pit. She rarely marched to battle with Joshua. But she walked often with Moses up and down the mountains of the wilderness, she mused with David in the valleys and pastures."[1]

Into the fabric of our history has been woven the result of that constant association with the Bible; and no future historian of these United States can adequately judge us or our forbears, unless he recognizes this fact of our early reverence for, and familiarity with, the old Bible.

So was it once with us. The Bible was the ark of every household, the arbiter in all

[1] F. B. Squire, *The Ballingtons.*

questions of right and wrong. It was a reverenced document, whose every word was deemed inspired, whose every statement was undisputed fact. And although we had finally accepted Galileo's theory of the universe, and so regarded as poetry the psalmist's declaration that the going forth of the sun is from one end of the heaven to the other, yet we held fast with reverent tenacity to the literal six days of creation. The Book of Jonah was regarded as an historical treatise, and we held it for fact that at Joshua's command the sun and moon stood still. The age understood that the prophet's "Thus saith the Lord" indicated a message which had been conveyed to him in a voice that would have been audible to others, had they been present. We knew that the Bible was a collection of books, written probably at various times; but we still held it to be inspired in word and in statement of fact.

It thus became to Protestantism the most sacred of objects. The irrevocable oath was sworn upon it, instead of upon the bones of saints or pieces of the Holy Rood. Its utter-

ances were sacrosanct, and one's eternal salvation was imperiled by doubt of the accuracy of its scientific or historical statements. To many it was an oracle, and in cases of doubt or perplexity the verse upon which the eye alighted at a chance opening of the book was regarded as a heaven-inspired direction for action. The book itself was holy; a soldier whose life had been saved because a Bible in his bosom stopped the bullet, was looked upon as a signal instance of the interposing of Divine Providence.

It was "the impregnable rock of Holy Scripture"; all doctrine must be proved by literal texts, even though taken piecemeal from their contexts; for back of *every word* was supposedly a "Thus saith the Lord."

A narrow view it seems now to us, but a deep one in its effect upon the characters of those who held it. For here was an object of reverence present in every household; a continual reminder of that Higher Power, and man's dependence upon it; something to reach up to; a standing refutation of that growing democratic principle, that all men,

all places, all things, were alike equal. It was the trusted guide of life and conduct; the unchangeable in a world of change; the inerrant in a world of ignorance and uncertainty.

This it was to the faithful, and more. For although "Thus saith the Lord" terrified the evildoers, it comforted the trusting hearts; and they forgot the terrors of the Law in the gentleness of the Gospel.

In such an atmosphere the child grew up of old. He was accustomed to see his grandmother sitting, as one has said, with her Bible on her knee, and the light of a far-seeing wonder on her face.

His toys included a Noah's ark; and his animal stories were not of the jungle, but of the serpent in Eden; of the ram caught in the bushes, which took Isaac's place; of Noah's exploring dove, of Balaam's speaking ass; of the lion that Samson slew bare-handed; of the ravens that fed Elijah; of the bears that devoured the irreverent children who had mocked Elisha; of the "little ewe lamb" of Nathan's rebuking parable; of the

fish that St. Peter caught with money in its mouth for taxes; of the sparrows sold for a farthing; and of that favored animal that carried the king when He triumphantly entered Jerusalem.

In his garden the "birds of the air" found nests in the cedars of Lebanon and the olives of Gethsemane, in the withered fig tree, and the mustard tree that had grown great from a small seed. There grew also the "mint, and the anise, and the cummin," the lilies of the field that toiled not, and the rose of Sharon; the weeping willows of Babylon, and that tree of life "which bare twelve crops of fruit," whose leaves were "for the healing of the nations."

The stories of Moses and Joseph were the familiar tales of his infancy; and the picturesque story of the Deliverance from Egypt and the forty years' wandering he followed as to-day one reads a serial story. He was thrilled with the adventures of Gideon and Samson, the daring exploits of David and Jonathan; the magnificence of Solomon, and the splendid bravery of Queen Esther.

The child prophet Samuel, the child king Joash, and the child Saviour, all had their special appeal for him.

So well had the pious chroniclers done their work that the child drew from their stories the lesson they tried to teach in their recital of history: that the one heinous sin was to forget to serve God, a sin for which no political magnificence offered any palliation: and they grasped unconsciously the stupendous truth that God is the Almighty Ruler who exacts righteousness from nations as well as from individuals.

The religion that the old child derived from the old Bible was a very personal one. To him all nature became, in Goethe's phrase, "for deity a living robe sublime." To him the great force in nature was not concealed in such a phrase as "an anthropomorphic God"; but was "my God, my Lord," a personal possession.

But forces were at work to change all this, to bring it to pass that the old Bible should become the new Bible, even as the old child was becoming the new child.

Men had been seeking truth in the Bible since the Reformation; and the search had emancipated their powers and widened their horizon. Starting with the theory that every word was true and inspired, yet knowing the fallibility of transcribers, scholars had sought to obtain the earliest manuscripts of the Bible. They were inspired with the desire to know the truth, by the Bible emphasis upon it; and the scientific spirit abroad in the world compelled them to investigate the very text of the sacred books. To this task they brought the critical acumen gained in many lines of study. They fearlessly pushed their investigations, and drew their conclusions as the truth seemed to be shown to them.

They found that the Bible was not only a book of books, but that many of these books were themselves compilations, edited under one name. Then they put the parts together in what they believed to be the true historical order, irrespective of the fact that they were destroying thus age-old traditions of authorship and of the sequence of

events. They were seeking the truth; were they not also seeking the Master who said, "I am the Truth"?

Some of these Higher Critics followed the search at great personal cost. For earnest seekers after truth were branded as heretics; and the advocacy of the results of these studies cost many a man his position as teacher or preacher.

Nor is this to be wondered at, for some of our old opinions were rudely shaken. No longer were we amazed at the advanced piety of some of the early kings; for we found that the piety of the Exilic period was responsible for the form of its expression. Some things that we had thought of as history were denominated poetry; and the new knowledge altered our ideas of some of the historical characters.

Yet the gains of this scholarly criticism were great.

The prophets were placed approximately each in his proper historical setting, and with a known background the universal appeal of their prophecies was strengthened.

The placing of all events and writings in their correct historical order has opened our eyes to a great fact: that the human race grew in its power of spiritual receptivity, and that as it grew, the enlarged revelation was given to it. We find here the authority for saying that the religious development of nations and of individuals is a growth; that we are not born spiritually perfected, and that no one generation has sounded the depths nor reached the heights possible of attainment by the spirit of man; and that the voice of prophecy is not dumb, but is sounding to-day in the ears that are open to hear it.

Surely this is a great gain. There is hope in such a view of the Scriptures; there is a humanness that makes their grandeur and loftiness more approachable. There is encouragement to grow, to strive, to seek for the new truth. For the truth of the Bible and its eternal message are not limited to any set phrase nor preconceived notion of its authorship. The prophet was "the mouth of the Lord," and he cared little to be re-

membered personally; but was chiefly concerned that his message should reach the hearts of his people.

It has troubled many to be told that the Book of Deuteronomy was probably not written by Moses, but was a book containing much of his teaching, although written probably in the reign of Manasseh. It has troubled more to hear of a second Isaiah, "Deutero-Isaiah, or the "Great Unknown," from whose pen came, during the Exile, some of the sublimest passages of that wonderful Book of Isaiah. The message was the same, no matter who delivered it; the moral effect of the stories was the same, no matter who edited the old manuscripts. To teach God by history, to praise Him in song, and to proclaim his warnings and his comfortings — these were the ends that they sought to reach, the goal of their ambition.

We must count among the gains of the critical movement the separation of historic fact from the later accretions, and also the shattering of the belief that every word was inspired. We have hence realized that the

truth of the spiritual message is not impaired by any scientific or historical inaccuracies in the form which clothes it. The recognition of this fact has taken from infidelity one of its favorite arguments; for the scoffers were wont to say, "If this is the inspired word of God, He does n't know as much about the laws of this world as we men of science do." But by changing the emphasis from matter to spirit, we learned that the great eternal truths still spoke to the heart of man.

What did it matter to those old chroniclers whether a king reigned exactly forty years or not? About forty years was close enough for them, for their object was to lay stress upon the moral lessons taught by history, not upon the mere facts of the case, except in so far as these were necessary to clothe and place it. A philosophy of history with Jehovah as the central cause was what they were trying to set forth for their people—not dates and dry chronicles. Were the Proverbs any the less valuable summaries of the wisdom of the East because Solomon did not write them all? Did the Psalms cease to

be the vehicle of expression for every emotion of the pious heart that could appropriate as its own that "poetry of friendship between God and man," simply because we were fairly certain that many of them were written long after "the sweet singer of Israel" had ceased his earthly harpings?

And although to our enlightened sense there was no longer "Thus saith the Lord" behind every word, yet we were more firmly convinced than ever before, that "No prophecy ever came by the will of man, but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit." (2 Peter 1 : 21.)

As a result of this certainty of belief men are seeking to popularize the study of the Bible. We live in a day of many versions. But during the generation that has elapsed since the Revised Version made its appearance, when successive versions broke down the respect for textual authority, and before the constructive results of the studies of the critics had been fully digested, there was a period of much uncertainty, and men ceased to read the Bible and to teach it to their

children as they had once done. "Shall I teach the old or the new version?" they asked, bewildered; and found it easier to teach nothing. As a consequence there has grown up a generation of young people to whom the great book, especially the Old Testament, is more unfamiliar than Homer; there are intelligent boys and girls of fifteen who do not know who Moses was.

So dense has the ignorance become that educators have finally recognized it as a defect in our educational system and have set about to remedy it. The most prominent stories of the Old Testament are among the requirements for college entrance. The State of Indiana has arranged that pupils may study the Bible outside of the public schools, as they wish; but must take examinations in the subject at the high school, which will count one half a credit on the course of studies. Other States are adopting measures looking to the same end; for since art and literature abound with references and allusions to the Bible, a knowledge of its contents is necessary to a complete education. And since

the stability of a republic depends upon the righteousness and integrity of its citizens, to teach these splendid ethics is recognized as an obligation of citizenship.

But the years that have brought such changes in the old Bible, have changed also the child whom we would reach with its message. Scientific investigation has entered even the nursery, and the child has been observed and experimented upon from his first day. We judge his intellectual grasp by his prehensile ability at the age of two weeks; we have found a theory for his choice of words; and we write papers upon his first passion, whether it be for blue bottles or cats.

The telephone is the familiar sound of his babyhood, and the graphophone has supplanted the lullaby. Pestalozzi, Froebel, and Montessori have preached the doctrine of child development by education, and even his games are contributory to this end. Small wonder is it if in general he thinks himself the center of things. Surrounded by marvelous conveniences, he wants to know, and seeks to enjoy. He has very definite ideas

of his likes and dislikes; "I want," and "I like," are his constant phrases.

No new thing astonishes him, for he has already grasped the marvel of aerial flight, of submarine boats, of wireless telephony, of electric and color photography. The phonograph, once a marvel, is his toy. Nor does anything long hold his interest. Like the Athenian of old he is seeking to hear "some new thing." He has a readiness to undertake new enterprises, he hails the new with joy, and faces the unknown with intrepidity. He has scant reverence for anything, and small respect for a thing because of age. "What does such a custom or tradition mean to-day?" is his question. "What bearing has that teaching on my life?" is his supreme inquiry, often tersely stated as "What's the use?"

He does not recognize obligations easily, and is restive under them. He is wiser than the ancients, for his teachers are trained, alert, intelligent, encouraging questions, and able to answer them.

But he does not know the Bible.

The child of to-day learns manners from the "Goops," and has his imagination stimulated by Red, Yellow, and Blue Fairy Books. He knows more of "Buster Brown" than of Joseph; and the "Jungle Stories" are better known than the kings of Israel. A small boy overhearing a conversation among his elders caught the word "Jehoshaphat," and promptly called out, "I know who he was." "Who was he?" asked the proud father. "The jumping kangaroo," replied the young Kiplingite.

The old child had a Sabbath which was a distinguishing mark of our American life; the new child has none. The quiet orderliness that comes from open churches and closed shops is lacking in the cities and towns that he knows. Competition is keen in every branch of life to-day; it is keenest in its demands for the time and attention of the growing child. The pleasure-gardens, the "movies," the trolley, offer attractions, within the reach of all, which did not exist for his brother of sixty years ago. He was good on Sunday partly because there were

no fascinating avenues open for him on that day except the Sunday-School with its music and comradeship.

But to-day, the new child must choose. The slot machine swallows his Sunday-School pennies; the excursion by trolley or automobile takes his time; and the funny page of the Sunday paper has taken the place of the Sunday-School book. He lives on a highly spiced diet of reading and illustration; he gets his information from headlines, and his opinions are formed by cartoons. It is action, not thought, that attracts him, and "nothing doing" is his phrase for a very dull time.

It is interesting to note how common these characteristics of the new child are; for they belong equally to the nursery pet and the street gamin. Motion, action, the desire for novelty, the lack of reverence, the willingness to accept the new — these characterize almost every class of child today.

Sixty years ago the deep poverty of this time of economic contrasts had not arisen.

The great horde of immigrants had just begun to arrive, and furnished no problem, as they were welcomed and easily assimilated. And although on our Western frontier there were settlements which needed the Gospel, most of the children grew up in more favored communities.

To-day there is another variety of the American child with whom we must reckon and for whom we must provide. These have not been born among the hills of New England, nor among the palmettos of the South; but Europe nurtured them and sent them to us. Many of their parents were religiously brought up, but their habits have suffered by the change to a new land, and the breaking of old associations; and the new language, which many of the adults never learn, is a great impediment.

So these children of the slums grow up with no teaching because of ignorance; and the children of happy households get none because of perplexity. "What must I believe?" one of them wrote to a paper recently. "Is there a God? My mother says

there is; my teacher at school says there is n't; and my father says he does n't know."

But can this Bible of ours supply any need of the bright, intelligent child of to-day? — this child to whom all things seem possible, and to whom the wireless telegraph has taught faith in the things that cannot be seen?

The new child needs the old Bible; needs the touch upon his own mental powers of its sublime literature; needs the language of its poets to unlock his own emotions in the presence of beauty and grandeur; needs its prophets to stir and direct his devotion; needs to grasp the idea of "God the Almighty Ruler" to find his own relative place in the universe; needs its splendid heroism to inspire his own; its zealous apostles to stir his own loyalty to the noblest of causes. "In the beginning, God," is a majestically simple statement whose truth he needs to know.

The new child is in need of a new interpretation of the Gospel which shall fit him to meet the problems of life to-day. The

times demand of religion an economic Gospel. The old benevolence and charity and almsgiving, mere palliations of misery, will no longer suffice to relieve the deep misery of poverty and the soul deadness of those who have become mere beasts of burden in our industrial system. He must be prepared to meet also the reckless infidelity of our time, which finds no God where there is no prosperity.

The children whom we train belong to both of the social classes: to the prosperous few from whom Agur prayed to be delivered, "lest I be full and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord?" or else to the poverty-stricken many, from whom also he sought escape, "lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain." (Proverbs 30: 9.) The child of to-day is the reformer of to-morrow, or the victim of its conditions. What can we do for him?

Says Professor Royce: "There is in the child a well-known disposition to idealize heroes and adventures, to live an imaginary life, to have ideal comrades, and to dream of possible great enterprises." And he adds: "If

I have never been fascinated by my heroes and the wonders of life, it is hard to fascinate me later with the call of duty. . . . It is in his fantasies then, that a child begins to enter into the kingdom of heaven." [1]

Will not the hero-tales of the Bible help him to heed the call of duty, and so make him a better citizen? From these old tales he will learn a love of country. He will absorb unconsciously the reverent and worshipful spirit of the Book; and surely amid the rush of to-day he needs concrete illustrations of what worship means; for no life is kept sane without worship.

There is here for him a broad and comprehensive philosophy of history, and direct teaching of the value of the individual life, and its relation to history as a whole. He finds here that Christian Socialism to which thoughtful minds are turning as the solution of our problems. For Labor and Capital, united at the point of contact, then separating like the sides of a triangle, can be joined only by Christ's teachings put into practice by both.

[1] *Philosophy of Loyalty*, p. 260.

A settlement worker found her class of one hundred small boys divided by racial animosities. She appealed to them thus: "Are n't you all my children?" "Yes 'm," they chorused. "Then are n't you brothers?" she asked; and the squabbling ceased, and peace settled upon the divided household. "Are n't you brothers?" the Bible is saying to its readers; and it takes the child back in spiritual lineage to his Father, God; so that the child trained in the Bible feels himself, as one of them put it, "Kin to God."

An age which is trying to put a moral interpretation upon even the rhymes of Mother Goose, and to read a spiritual import into everything, can surely find no fitter vehicle for such teaching than these stories. The supernatural becomes the natural to a child so trained, and faith is easy for him; and it is "the things which are not seen" which are eternal.

It is obvious that if we are to reach the new child with the old Bible, we must give it to him in its most enlightened form. For the Bible has an appeal for the new child,

and if he does not find it, the fault is ours, not his.

He needs the book in its most recent form in order that he may associate it more easily with his own life; that its characters may have a vital interest for him; for the child of to-day deals with realities. The child's readiness to accept the new, and his very ignorance of the older form of the Bible, make it easy to teach him the new Bible.

The chief obstacle to bringing the old Bible and the new child into right relations lies in the fact that the older child has not studied the new Bible enough to appreciate it and present it to him. We might as well be St. Simeon Stylites on his pillar above the market-place, as to try to teach the modern child if we dissociate ourselves from the current life, the current thought of to-day. For the thought generations change more quickly among children than among adults; and the new teaching is in the air, and has tinged all their studies. We must meet the attitude to life of the present-day child if we are to teach him.

This, then, is the duty laid upon us; to teach the new Bible to the new child, that we may give him the right historical perspective for his future; that we may impress upon him that the Eternal purpose may be worked out even by human politics, for the Lord "maketh even the wrath of man to serve him"; and above all must he learn that we cannot be a righteous nation unless as individuals we are loyal soldiers in the service of the King. For the joy of living is loving, and the joy of loving is serving. Whom shall these children serve if not the Lord Jesus Christ; and how shall they serve unless they love Him; and how shall they know and love, unless we teach them?

Scholarship and knowledge may be required to teach these lessons; but it must be knowledge born of experience and scholarship illumined by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, if it is to reach and help the children of to-day.

I once asked a distinguished surgeon, "Are you ever nervous about undertaking an operation?" He answered, "I think only

of the need of help, and forget everything else."

So must it be with us. Let us not hold back from teaching because of our imperfections, if only we have quickened souls: the need is so great. Rather let us focus our thought upon these children, in whose hands lie the to-morrows of history; these who are to be the statesmen who shall achieve, and the poets who, hearing "the call of the flute of the Great Beyond," shall interpret it to their time; from these shall come the prophets to whom shall be given the fuller revelation of God, if by our efforts they have been fitted to receive it.

The little child is sitting, where the Master placed him, in the midst of us. The ages are in his keeping; his training is in ours.

THE END

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